Drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge THE EDITORS

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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by Jed Perl

Rorty's Many Mistakes
by Simon Blackburn

AUGUST 20, 2001

Creating Laura Bush

By SARAH WILDMAN

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Serious Games

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

Watching while millions of Chinese celebrated their country's successful bid to host the 2008 Summer Olympics, I couldn't help but think about the individual victims of a repressive government.

Perhaps it was the stark contrast between the organized pageantry of this celebration and the equally well choreographed (but covert) campaign going on against Chinese-American scholars and teachers in China. Or maybe it was seeing the euphoric children paraded in front of cameras during the victory celebration, which contrasted so sharply with the forty children killed recently in an explosion at their school in the village of Fanglin—the result of a makeshift firecracker factory where they were being forced to work to make money for their school.

We know these horrifying things are happening—despite the government's determined efforts to bury them—because the news trickles through via word of mouth, or faxes, or conventional media, or the Internet. One thing China's expansion into the world marketplace has done is to reveal the wholesale crackdown on individual expression, the "re-education" and even torture of thousands of people who peacefully try to exercise freedom of association or religion or thought, or who protest horrendous working conditions.

For all Americans these practices are revolting. For teacher unionists they are horrifying examples of a society that suppresses the heart and soul of education—freedom of inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and exploration.

Imprisoning Scholars

Consider the case of Dr. Gao Zhan, a research scholar on the faculty of American University in Washington, who was arrested by the Chinese government in February, along with her husband. Recently convicted of spying and sentenced to 10 years in prison, she was released and expelled after pressure from the U.S. Shortly after Dr. Gao Zhan was arrested, Dr. Li Shaomin, an American citizen educated at Princeton University and a business professor at the City University of Hong Kong, was detained while traveling in China, and he too was recently convicted and expelled. Several other academics with ties to America also were arrested this year.

All of these people were accused of spying and denied access to lawyers and family members. Still other scholars, like the economist He Qinglian, have been forced to flee the country because they faced arrest. The charges against these scholars have no basis, but are tools used to silence their voices and suppress the spread of ideas and information.

That's why there is an equally virulent crackdown on what has passed for a free press in China. The top editors of the country's semi-independent newspaper, *Southern Weekend*, were recently removed after the paper continued its critical reporting on government corruption, police brutality, and official misdeeds.

China is silencing scholars because it fears freedom of inquiry.

Sadly, the situation is getting worse. Twelve years after Tiananmen Square, innocent people are being imprisoned for trying to organize real unions, for conducting scholarly exploration, and for trying to exercise basic democratic rights. The state controls who moves from the countryside to the cities; it covers up illness and hunger; and it frequently bars students from going to college if they are disabled, older, or married.

This is a society that needs education even as it fears it. It needs technology, but it tightly controls access to the Internet and blocks exposure to such "dangerous" publications as *The New York Times*. It needs universities, think tanks, and business associations, but only allows those that support the Communist Party. Any efforts to start truly independent organizations—social clubs, churches, or labor unions—are immediately shut down, and their organizers routinely imprisoned.

Disrespecting Education

The denial of the freedom to write, investigate, collaborate, teach, learn, inquire, dissent, argue, or simply be skeptical is anathema to American values. American democracy is strengthened immeasurably by the freedom of inquiry fostered in the best higher education system in the world and an elementary and secondary system that brings a plethora of people and cultures together while preparing them for citizenship.

That's why it's particularly chilling for Americans when we hear about the imprisonment and harassment of scholars in China at the same time that our government is considering broadening trade. The expansion of China's economy has not been accompanied by the emergence of civil society. In fact, oppression has worsened. Those of us committed to democracy and human rights have to keep the pressure on. If we fail to link trade with democratic rights, we cede our ability to influence the most populous nation in its treatment of its workers, scholars, and other citizens.

While China may not share or care about our values, they do want our marketplace. Isn't it in the interest of our great democracy to do all we can to make the world as safe for scholars as for salesmen?

Before the Olympic Games take place in Beijing in 2008, we have the opportunity to maintain pressure on the Chinese government. We should speak loudly on behalf of those unjustly imprisoned and persecuted, so that they and their families will be able to celebrate freedom as happily as the Chinese government celebrated the acquisition of the Games. ▮

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German question

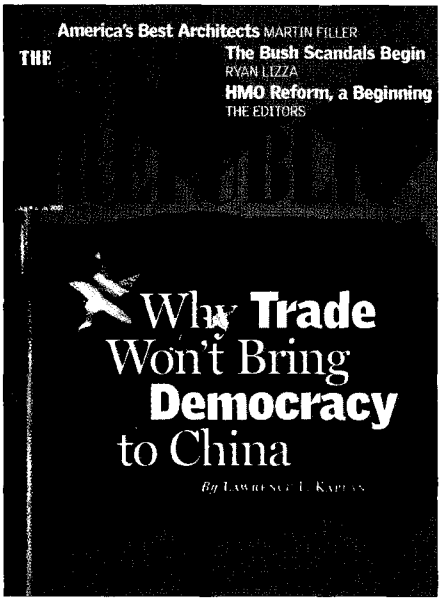
TO THE EDITORS:

In "Trade Barrier," Lawrence F. Kaplan claims that the notion that trade and growth will promote political reform in China is a "libertarian fantasy" that "rests on no historical foundation" (July 9 & 16). "One hundred years ago in Germany" and elsewhere, he writes, "capitalist development ... buttressed, rather than undermined, authoritarian regimes." As Sheri Berman explains in the current issue of *World Politics*, however, Wilhelmine Germany saw exactly the opposite: a direct and positive linkage among economic, social, and political development. And, as George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham demonstrate in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the same linkage is occurring in China today and should soon accelerate—unless a new cold war with the United States gives Chinese hard-liners a domestic boost. Slighting the power of economic factors in transforming China because of impatience would be a serious mistake, for there is overwhelming evidence that, as Berman concludes, "it is simply not possible *over the long term* for a simple authoritarian regime to maintain control over an increasingly economically developed society."

GIDEON ROSE
Managing Editor
Foreign Affairs
New York, New York

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN REPLIES:

The current issue of *World Politics* notwithstanding, the Second Reich hardly qualifies as a model of political development. "[T]he national State that came into existence in 1871," writes Gordon Craig, the preeminent historian of Germany, "was an authoritarian structure that was based on a constitutional theory that specifically repudiated the idea of popular sovereignty, and, in its brief and power-obsessed career, denied to its citizens any opportunity to grow in self-reliance and political responsibility." Is it really necessary to remind Gideon Rose that this tale of "political development" culminated in something other than democracy, and that credit for Germany's eventual transformation belongs not to capitalism but to Patton's Third Army? Despite the fact that the current issue of *Foreign Affairs* claims otherwise, it is quite possible for an authoritarian regime to wield control over an increasingly economically developed society—whether in Germany and Japan a century ago or in places like Singapore, Malaysia, and, yes, China today.



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TO THE EDITORS:

I was one of the lawyers representing Jonathan Tasini in *The New York Times Company* v. *Tasini*. In "Freelanced" (July 9 & 16), Jeffrey Rosen critiques the Supreme Court's decision in the case by citing it as an example of a "troubling trend" in copyright law toward overprotection of established authors at the expense of readers and free public access to published works. But, unlike the other examples cited by Rosen, *Tasini* did not involve a balance between authors on the one hand and readers interested in free public access on the other. Lexis-Nexis and the publishers who lost the case do not provide free public access to freelance works in their archives; they charge the public handsome fees for access to the works. The question in *Tasini* was who, between authors and publishers, is entitled to be paid when an article is republished by a service such as Lexis-Nexis. No matter who prevailed on that question, the public was not going to get free access to copyrighted articles.

LEON DAYAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

Why would the *Tasini* decision create holes in the historical record, as Jeffrey Rosen suggests? Lexis-Nexis pays *The New York Times* for its articles; would the *Times* really forgo that source of revenue just because freelancers ask for a small cut of it? I think the *Times* is bluffing—or cutting off its nose to spite its face.

If it's exposure Rosen wants, he may be happy with a nonexclusive secondary-rights agreement, in which his publishers give him 50 percent of any sale to third parties. That way, he makes money when they do. Likewise, he still gets exposure, even when no money changes hands. But, as a full-time freelancer, I must add that exposure doesn't pay the rent.

CATE T. CORCORAN
San Francisco, California

Expense account

TO THE EDITORS:

I disagree with your support for the McCain-Kennedy patients' bill of rights ("Paying the Bill," July 9 & 16). As a physician who is a former HMO employee, has been involved in HMO coverage decisions, and is a longtime HMO member, I may be biased, but I'm very familiar with the issues. The major problem with American health care is that, despite the fact that we spend far more per capita than any other country, our public health statistics are mediocre. One major reason is that most other industrialized countries have health insurance for all their citizens, while 15 percent of American citizens have no health insurance, mainly because they can't afford it. The McCain-Kennedy bill will do worse than nothing to help those (the uninsured) who need help the most: It will make HMOs significantly more expensive and unaffordable for an increasing percentage of Americans. The bill would force all HMOs to pay for unproven tests and treatments that misguided or anxious patients and their doctors may want—or risk a multimillion-dollar lawsuit. Much of this demand is generated by direct-to-consumer advertising and lavish gift-giving to physicians by pharmaceutical companies. Shouldn't we allow less expensive health insurance for people who can't afford, or don't want, gold-plated health insurance?

If health care outcomes improved linearly with spending, the U.S. health care system would produce results second to none. Promoting multimillion-dollar lawsuits against HMOs will worsen our health outcomes, not improve them.

JOHN ALAN STEENBERGEN, M.D.
Indianapolis, Indiana

Casualties of success

TO THE EDITORS:

Yossi Klein Halevi's June 18 article, "Admission Ticket," called the Russian immigration wave of the 1990s "Israel's great immigrant success story." Yet this success story has come at a price: the interruption of the renaissance of Israel's Arab citizens, who, despite the liberal promise of the

continued on page 45

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TIMOTHY TAYLOR (M.A., Stanford, 1984) is Managing Editor of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* and a lecturer in economics at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. For eight years, he wrote a widely disseminated economics column for the *San Jose Mercury-News.* His teaching skills have earned him awards from the Associated Students of Stanford University, the Department of Economics at the University of Minnesota, and the Humphrey Institute, whose students named him Teacher of the Year for 1997. He speaks frequently on economic topics to diverse extra-academic groups, including high school teachers, foreign diplomats, and community groups.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Fighting Irish

HERE WE GO AGAIN. The number of times "historic" peace has broken out in Northern Ireland—leading to cries of a "historic" breakthrough from the American media and pressure for more concrete concessions from the Protestant Unionists in return for the IRA's purely rhetorical ones—are now beyond counting. This week's headlines were almost a parody of the genre. "Peace" is within grasp. Both sides have to deal with their extremist factions within. Yet another collapse of negotiations can be averted if the Unionists make one more concession. And so on.

Has everyone forgotten the past three years? The 1998 Good Friday Agreement was relatively simple. London and Dublin wanted a democratic coalition government including all sides in Ulster. All factions, especially the IRA, would disarm; in return, the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, could join a democratic government. Northern Ireland's police force would be overhauled and renamed to purge it of Protestant sectarianism. A neutral decommissioning body would be established to verify disarmament on both sides. The critical principle was that terrorism would not be rewarded. For the IRA to enjoy political power, it would have to renounce violence and give up its weapons.

How did the IRA respond at the time? "The IRA commitment to assisting the search for justice and peace is a matter of public record," its official statement read in April 1998. "This commitment remains. Let us make it clear that there will be no decommissioning by the IRA." Clear enough? Not for Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, or his emissary, George Mitchell. Each insisted that the IRA was acting in good faith. Sinn Fein was included in the new power-sharing arrangement. The principle that terrorists could not participate in democratic institutions unless they gave up their arms was violated. "Peace" was too important.

In July 1999, as Blair, Clinton, and Mitchell patiently waited for disarmament, the IRA clarified things: "Those who demand the decommissioning of IRA weapons lend themselves in the current political context inadvertently, or otherwise, to the failed agenda which seeks the defeat of the IRA. The British government have the power to change that context and should do so." More concessions from London were required. More came: Hundreds of Republican terrorists, some guilty of horrifying butchery of civilians, were released from prison. The British government commissioned a report that argued for reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, a further reduction in the British military presence, a halving of the police force, and more. Under international pressure, the IRA agreed to meet with the disarmament go-between, General John de Chastelain of Canada.

But meeting with him didn't change the IRA's position. As it reiterated in February 2000, "We have never entered into any agreement or undertaking or understanding at any time whatsoever on any aspect of decommissioning. We have not broken any commitment or betrayed anyone." The IRA was telling the truth. Undeterred, in November 2000, the Blair government passed a law for radical reform of the RUC and, in February, initiated a Catholic recruitment program for the new force. Neither Sinn Fein nor the more moderate Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party agreed to cooperate. Meanwhile, the so-called Real IRA, whose relationship to the nominal IRA remains mysterious, started bombing again—seven attacks in the last year, the most recent on August 3 in a London subway station. That, we were also told, should not be interpreted as a violation of the cease-fire. The real IRA dutifully said that these "Real IRA" bombings were not their responsibility. Yet another deadline loomed for making good on the Good Friday accord, with even *The New York Times* acknowledging that the IRA bore the brunt of the responsibility for failure.

So this week—surprise!—peace broke out again. The IRA had a meeting with Chastelain and came to an agreement on a verifiable means of destroying its arsenal. We don't know who was at the meeting; we don't know what the agreed means of destruction was; we don't know the timetable of such destruction. In fact, we know almost nothing—except that the IRA has made a private promise to a third party that belies every one of its public statements over the last few years. But the tactic clearly worked, as it has so many times before. The IRA knows that vague promises are enough for Blair and the Americans. But the IRA also knows that Unionist leaders will lose the support of their people if they accept yet more IRA rhetoric without any proof of actual disarmament. So the Unionists are now being blamed—again—for derailing "peace."

The Unionists are not blameless. They have an appalling record of mistreating Catholics in the North, and some are militant bigots. They have their own paramilitary groups, although their power pales in comparison with the IRA's (since 1969, Republicans have claimed twice as many lives as Unionists). But the main Unionist leader, David Trimble, has staked his career on making Good Friday work; he has gone further than any Protestant leader ever has, and he is broadly respected. If peace cannot be made with him, it cannot be made. And the basic fact remains: More than three years after the Good Friday accord, the IRA still hasn't given up a single weapon. As the graffiti in Catholic Belfast puts it: NOT AN OUNCE. NOT A BULLET. And there's a more recent slogan, "We've Got Croatian Rockets"—a reference to Real IRA boasts of an arms spending spree in the Balkans. Sweet talk, huh?

If the Unionists hold their ground and power-sharing fails again, Blair will have to either reimpose direct rule from London or hold new elections. And guess what? Under the benign influence of the peace process, the polls predict big electoral gains for the extremes on both sides. Killings will also almost certainly surge, as they did after the last "peace" breakthrough. The year of the Good Friday Agreement, 1998, saw twice as many murders as 1997, up from an all-time low in 1995.

This is not some paradox or irony. It is a demonstration of the obvious: You cannot negotiate peace with people whose power is entirely dependent on the will to wage war. This is anathema to many Americans steeped in the banality that peace talks are always better than no talks, that ancient conflicts can always be solved by the right facilitator. But the IRA's refusal to disarm is no mystery. War is its rationale. If power really were negotiated and shared, the IRA would be supplanted by moderate Republicans who would, by their very involvement in an Ulster government, legitimize continued British sovereignty. Why should a group that has gained everything it has through violence and murder, and whose raison d'être is implacable hostility to any British presence, ever decide that politics is a useful alternative? It's like asking turkeys to vote for Thanksgiving. They can't. They won't. And real peace won't break out until they do.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Over a Barrel

WHAT'S SO BAD about drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, anyway? From the wailing and rending of garments that has followed the House of Representatives vote last week to allow ANWR exploration, you'd think environmentalists had good evidence that drilling for oil and gas would ecologically devastate the 20-million-acre Arctic tundra. They don't. Last year, the Trustees for Alaska—the state's main anti-drilling group—released an exhaustive report on the impact of 25 years of oil production along Alaska's North Slope, adjacent to ANWR. The report found plenty of small environmental mishaps that affected tiny pockets of land (mostly spills of process chemicals and diesel fuel), but the overall damage was minor. The only calamity, the *Exxon Valdez* spill, was a transportation blunder hundreds of miles from the nearest drill rig.

In particular, environmentalists warned that North Slope drilling might wipe out caribou, the region's dominant large mammal. It hasn't. Since drilling began in 1977, the caribou population is actually *up*. It's true that ANWR, unlike the North Slope, is a wildlife refuge. But wildlife refuges in the lower 48 states are routinely prospected for oil and gas; you just never hear about it because there has been no serious environmental harm. And because ANWR exploration would be conducted with technology not available 25 years ago—roads made out of ice that melt away in the summer and horizontal drilling that requires fewer holes in the ground—it would probably do even less environmental damage than has occurred elsewhere.

But there's another reason for Democrats to support drilling in ANWR: politics. Environmentally, the much more significant fight over Bush's energy bill concerns federal gas-mileage standards for SUVs. Current federal rules reward SUVs for being huge, wasteful polluters. Because they are categorized as "trucks"—a designation originally associated with some kind of commercial purpose—they need to meet a much lower miles-per-gallon standard than regular cars and are allowed to emit much more smog and up to *three times as much* greenhouse gas. In fact, today's fuel crunch can be traced to the advent of the SUV and its light-truck cousins. From 1975 to 1984, the average mpg of American vehicles improved by 62 percent without any loss of acceleration. Since then, fuel-economy gains have stalled. That needs to change. Last week the National Academy of Sciences concluded that mpg for light trucks could be increased as much as 50 percent—raising them to the same fuel-economy level, on average, as cars—without any net cost to SUV buyers (if you factor in fuel savings). Such an increase would reduce smog and greenhouse gases and cut demand for gasoline—which, ultimately, is the only way to limit future oil exploration.

Higher mpg standards for SUVs would also reduce their outsized, overweight designs, making the roads safer for everyone. (Hundreds of pounds could be cut from the typical SUV's weight without making it any less safe for occupants.) In an accident, today's huge SUVs are almost three times more likely than cars to kill someone in the other vehicle. And, contrary to popular wisdom, supertanker-size SUVs don't make their occupants extra safe. Yes, SUV passengers are more likely to survive side and front crashes, but that advantage is offset by higher fatalities in rollovers. In fact, were it not for the boom in SUVs and light trucks, thousands fewer people would die on America's roads each year.

Still, on the same day the House voted to allow ANWR exploration, it voted down meaningful fuel-efficiency reform. Instead, it passed a fig leaf that requires new SUVs to use five billion gallons less gasoline between 2004 and 2010—which may sound like a lot but would mean an overall reduction of national gasoline usage of less than 1 percent.

When Congress returns from its August recess, the energy debate will shift to the Senate, where Democrats have a stronger hand. Most environmentalists and editorial pages will focus on stopping ANWR drilling; SUV fuel efficiency will receive much less attention. Liberals might well win on the former and lose on the latter. Far better would be a grand compromise: Democrats accepting drilling in ANWR in return for Republicans accepting tough standards for SUVs. Environmentally, the net impact would be overwhelmingly positive. And the compromise would have the added advantage of being intellectually honest. Americans want cheap oil, but they dislike both the new exploration and the heightened conservation it requires. Today Democrats tell them they can do without the former, and Republicans tell them they can do without the latter. Both parties are wrong. Passing both ANWR exploration *and* strict SUV regulations would mean Washington had finally decided to tell the country the truth about energy policy. And it probably wouldn't hurt the caribou a bit. ■

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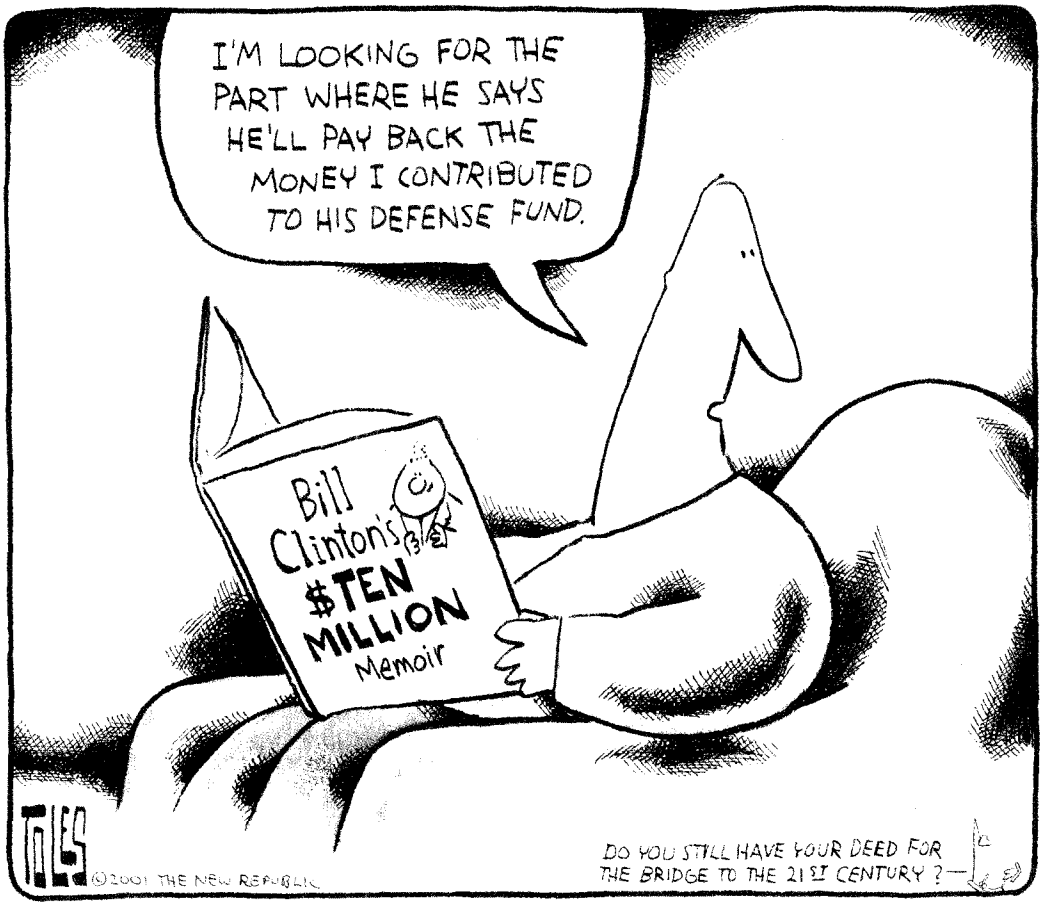
N O T E B O O K

SUPREME INJUSTICE: Hard as it is to believe, Alan Dershowitz—champion of Claus Von Bulow, Leona Helmsley, Jonathan Pollard, and O.J. Simpson—may have just signed on to his worst case yet. It's the case of convicted Pan Am Flight 103 bomber Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed al-Megrahi, whose legal team Dershowitz has joined for al-Megrahi's appeal. Several things make Dershowitz's latest crusade unusually repellent, even by his standards. First, there is Dershowitz's O.J. defense—namely, that in fingering al-Megrahi, "the wrong person may well have been convicted of the crime and the real mass murderer may not have been charged." If so, perhaps Dershowitz can explain away the mountain of evidence tying al-Megrahi to the bombing. There is, for starters, the fact that al-Megrahi, a Libyan intelligence operative, was in the Malta airport, traveling on a phony passport, on the day the bomb was loaded there, and the fact that a Malta shop owner identified al-Megrahi as the person who purchased the clothes found in the suitcase that contained the bomb. Then there are Dershowitz's past statements: his accusation that various other Jews are, as he referred to one target, "apologists" for "enemies of Israel and the Jews" and his declaration that "we ought to be going after people like Qaddafi." Such bombast seems particularly rich given that Dershowitz will be working hand in hand with a consortium of Libyan lawyers funded by the Libyan government. Make no mistake: Dershowitz can defend whomever he wants. But, please, spare us any more observations along the lines of "Every time I attend a gathering of Jewish children ... I imagine SS guards lining up these children for the gas chambers." Evidently the children lining up to board Pan Am 103 don't evoke such a vivid image. "Dershowitz is just despicable," laments Susan Cohen, whose daughter died on Pan Am 103. We have nothing to add.

BUSINESS AS USUAL: "Justice delayed is justice denied," Attorney General John Ashcroft told the American Bar Association's annual convention this week. The motivation for this pronouncement was Ashcroft's pique that the Senate "has moved slowly" in its consideration of President Bush's judicial nominees, resulting in a spate of vacancies that constitute "judicial emergencies." There are a few problems with Ashcroft's complaint. First, it's not true that the Senate has moved slowly: In less than eight months, it has approved about as many federal appeals court judges as it did in both Poppy's and Bill Clinton's entire first year in office, according to the Senate Judiciary Committee. But the greater problem with Ashcroft's indignation is its staggering hypocrisy: for almost no one in America bears greater responsibility for the current "judicial emergencies" than he does. When President Clinton nominated Ronnie White to become a district court judge in 1997, then-Senator Ashcroft blocked his nomination for two years before leading the campaign to kill it on the Senate floor. A year earlier, he placed a "hold" on Margaret Morrow's nomination to a California federal district court and opposed the confirmations of Merrick B. Garland, Frederica Massiah-Jackson, and Clarence Sundram. (Massiah-Jackson and Sundram, like White, never made it to the bench.) As one Ashcroft aide bragged to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1997, "We're making business as usual impossible." Before Ashcroft chastises the Senate, he might want to consider his own record. Responsibility delayed is responsibility denied.

SNOW JOBS: If you have read anything lately about drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (with the exception of our editorial, "Over a Barrel," page 7), you have probably come across the statistic that it would create



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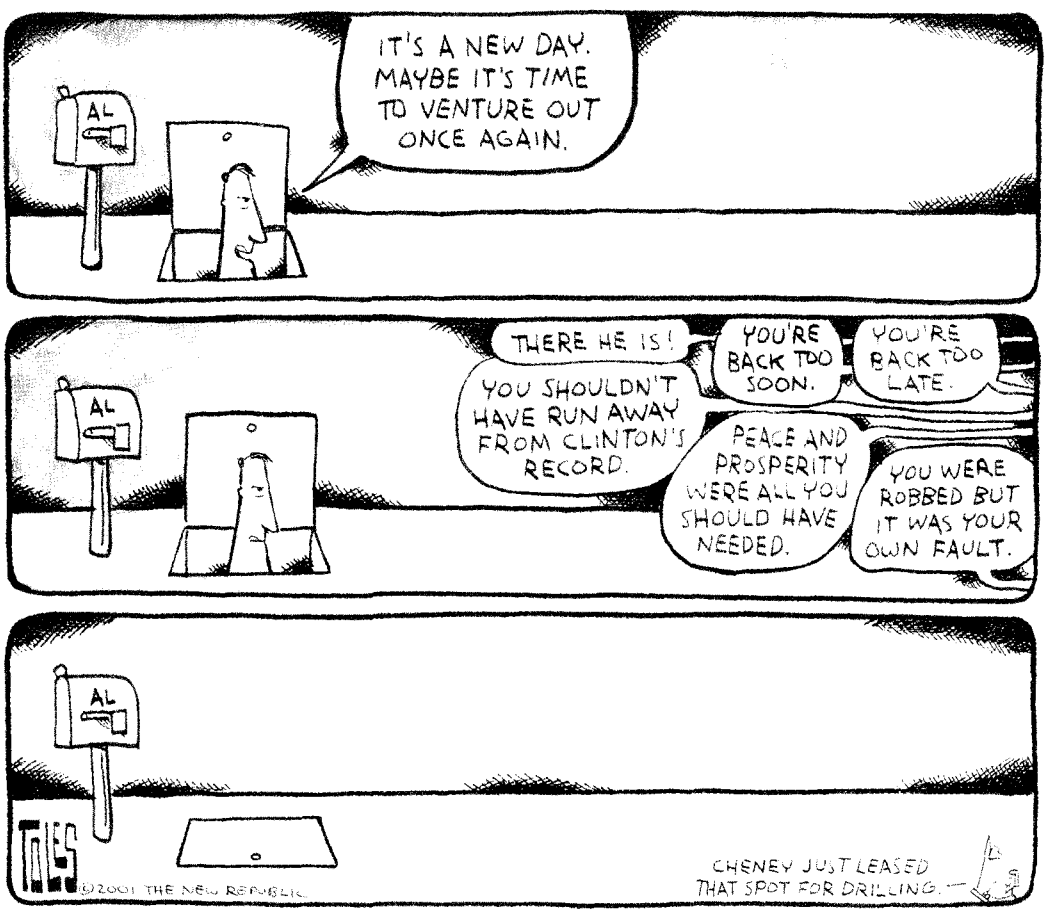
735,000 jobs. The Bush administration, with help from the Teamsters, has peddled this number endlessly. TV pundit John McLaughlin and an editorial in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* have reported it as a fact; numerous other news outlets simply repeat it as a contention. But if you think about the statistic for even a moment, its sheer ludicrousness is evident. If true, it would mean that more than one in every 200 American workers owed his job to ANWR drilling. Not surprisingly, the figure comes from a 1990 study paid for by the oil industry. Even a spokesman for the consulting firm that conducted it admits "it's very outdated." Not that it was accurate when it first came out: The study tendentiously assumes that oil discovered in Alaska would substantially reduce oil prices nationally, resulting in a wave of activity that would ripple through the economy, producing jobs far and wide. In the current economy, it is generally assumed that $1 billion in spending will result in the creation of 22,000 jobs. The ANWR study, by contrast, assumes that the same amount of spending will create 130,000 jobs. According to the Congressional Research Service, "[T]he study's estimates on effects on GNP and employment appear generous" and have "a tendency to select the more, or most, optimistic of underlying resource scenarios." In other words, it's made-up.

THE NEW FEDERALISM: During the final 2000 presidential debate, then-candidate Bush dodged a question about whether he supported the Norwood-Dingell patients' bill of rights (he didn't) by arguing, "I do support a national patients' bill of rights. As a matter of fact, I brought Republicans and Democrats together to do just that in the state of Texas, to get a patients' bill of rights through.... I don't want the [federal legislation] to supersede good law like we've got in Texas." Fast-forward to the compromise bill Bush pushed through the House last week. The legislation bestows a number of goodies upon the insurance industry: It would give HMOs certain legal advantages in court and restrict class-action suits by patients or doctors who allege systematic wrongdoing. (Several such cases are already pending in Miami; the House bill would likely render them moot.) The big favor, though, is language that would require courts to substitute the relatively lax federal standards for liability in lieu of existing state laws. In other words, Bush's legislation would supersede stronger state HMO reforms—such as the "good law" he passed in Texas. Perhaps W. should have told the truth last October—that he considered the Texas bill so "good" he fought it.

THE NEW FRUGALITY: One of the few silver linings in the Bush budget was $28 billion set aside for providing health insurance to those who now lack it. It's not an overwhelming amount of money, particularly when spread out over ten years, but it's better than nothing. Or is it? The funding is subject to certain conditions—chief among them that the budget surplus be large enough to cover the cost. Back when the budget season started, this didn't seem like a problem. But that was before the Bush tax cut and a slumping economy sent surplus estimates plummeting—perhaps low enough to kill the program. Senate Democrats are eager to get the first installment of the $28 billion out now, before revised surplus estimates dry up the available funds. But, as *The Sacramento Bee* recently reported, House Republicans say it wouldn't be fiscally prudent. Where have we heard that before?



EXCEPT FOR THE SEX SCANDAL AND PARIAH STATUS, THAT IS: "He's going to take some time off, and he's going to have some meetings. It's August as usual."—Mike Lynch, chief of staff to Representative Gary Condit ■

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On the Hill

Wag the Dog

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

YOU'D THINK CHARLIE STENHOLM would be putty in the president's hands. A conservative Democratic congressman from the dry plains of West Texas, Stenholm voted for Ronald Reagan's 1981 tax cut and once threatened a revolt against former Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neill. More recently, he was one of five House Democrats who voted to impeach Bill Clinton, and he's come out in support of partially privatizing Social Security. In person, Stenholm is lanky, tanned, and wizened—like a man accustomed to a mean sun—projecting just the kind of Old West stoicism W. affects. During the transition to the Bush administration, Stenholm's name was even floated as a potential secretary of agriculture.

But, seven months into the Bush administration, Stenholm hasn't emerged as a White House ally; in fact, he's become one of W.'s most dogged adversaries. A relentless critic of the Bush tax cut, he co-sponsored the Democratic alternative to Bush's energy bill last week. He also opposed the Bush-Norwood HMO deal and supports a prescription-drug benefit twice as big as Bush has proposed. Ask Stenholm how much the White House has reached out to him, and he glares at the Capitol's marble floor and snaps: "Zero."

And for George W. Bush, that's a problem. The president decamped to Crawford, Texas, on a high note last week, having won a string of high-stakes votes in Congress. But he won them—as he's won most of his big fights—with little or no Democratic backing. His eleventh-hour patients' bill of rights compromise with Georgia Republican Charlie Norwood, for instance, won the votes of just five House Democrats. And so the structural problem of Bush's presidency remains: He is popular with his conservative base but has made few inroads with Democrats and independents. Indeed, the aggressive outreach that enabled his recent legislative victories was directed at moderate *Republicans*. And, with a minority in the Senate and a narrow majority in the House, that's not a strategy for long-term success.

The peculiar thing about Bush's highly partisan legislative formula is that few expected it to be this way. The governor who had worked so closely with conservative Democrats in Texas seemed to have a perfect partner-in-waiting on the other side of the congressional aisle: the Blue Dog Democrats. The group consists of 32 conservative House Democrats such as Stenholm, who banded together after the 1994 election out of frustration with their party's liberal orthodoxy. Most represent heavily rural, often Southern districts, many of which went for Bush in November. (A Blue Dog is a proverbial "yellow dog" Democrat choked blue by the party.) When Bush took office, memories of the cooperation between the Southern "Boll Weevil" Democrats and Ronald Reagan led to confident predictions that the Blue Dogs would routinely support the new president. In December *The Washington Post* announced that the Blue Dogs "are poised to become perhaps Bush's most valuable ally.... [They are] the new power brokers of the 107th Congress, who will help shape all major legislation." MSNBC even declared Gary Condit—formerly best-known as a Blue Dog leader—one of eight Democratic lawmakers "who can make or break Bush's legislative agenda." (That must have been a handy icebreaker at singles bars.)

But it hasn't worked out that way. Instead, the Blue Dogs have become some of House Speaker Dick Gephardt's most reliable allies, denouncing the Bush tax cut, pushing campaign finance reform, and resisting the president's weaker patients' bill of rights. One reason is that the makeup of the Blue Dogs has changed in recent years. Like the term New Democrat, membership in the Blue Dogs has become a badge of pragmatic centrism, attracting otherwise liberal politicos like Tennessee Representative Harold Ford Jr.—who, as a young black man educated at St. Albans School and the University of Pennsylvania, is the near-antithesis, culturally speaking, of the archetypal Blue Dog. But the primary reason for the Blue Dogs' transformation from pseudo-Republicans to loyal Democrats is that, on the issues they care about, the parties themselves have switched places. Many of the Democratic policies that most alienated the Blue Dogs—gun control, welfare, hostility to the military—have, in recent years, been effectively shelved by the party leadership. And on the most cherished of all Blue Dog causes—balancing the budget and paying off the national debt—the Democrats have become deficit hawks, while the GOP has turned from fiscal conservatism to fiscal recklessness.

INDEED, ANY HOPE of cooperation between Bush and the Blue Dogs was probably dashed when Republican leaders rammed through the House a Bush tax cut filled with budget gimmickry. The Blue Dogs—who had written to Bush in January calling for a plan to devote half the surplus to debt reduction and divide the rest between tax cuts and new spending—yelped in anger. Rather than responding himself, Bush sent his budget director, Mitch Daniels, who reportedly alienated members with a presentation that the group's budget wonks found dishonest and insulting. When the House approved Bush's $1.6 trillion tax cut plan in March, Stenholm railed against it on the floor, and all but three Blue Dogs voted no. "I had many of my colleagues approach me and say, 'Gosh, I never thought you guys would be opposing the tax plan,'" says Ford. "'I thought *we'd* be fighting *you*.'"

Alienated from the president on their core issue, the Blue Dogs have been loath to trust him ever since. Eleven of them, mostly from energy-producing states, voted for the president's energy bill in the House last week. But the remaining 21 opposed the plan, complaining that its $34 billion in corporate tax breaks weren't paid for. The coalition has also spurned Bush on campaign finance reform and the patients' bill of rights—in part as the result of cajoling from Gephardt, who has grown fixated on keeping his rural members happy. After several Blue Dogs jumped to the Republican Party in

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Preparing for the Computer Wars

Bruce Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

If you believed press reports earlier this year, Chinese technogeeks were preparing to bring down the Internet by jamming American web sites. Supposedly they were upset over the up-close-and-personal encounter between our EP-3E surveillance aircraft and their fighter jet over the South China Sea.

Alas, "Hack the USA Week" was a bust and may have been mainly media hype in any case. As it turned out, only a few United States web sites with sloppy security were defaced with graffiti.

That's the good news. The bad news is—as with last year's Love Bug virus attacks—these pranks are diverting attention from a more serious problem. **The real threat is not the hackers you see; it's the ones you don't.**

Military organizations in several countries are busy developing capabilities for computer network attacks. There is also a growing international trade among terrorists in "hackers for hire." Corporate spies and organized crime are getting into the act too.

These pros are developing tools to steal data and win wars. Professional info-warriors spend months probing targeted networks. When they crack into a network, they don't publicize their success. They exploit it.

If a crisis were to break out—say, a conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan—these specialists could attack U.S. computer networks to intimidate American leaders or complicate military mobilization. Terrorists could use computer warfare to hamstring civil defense workers and police responding to bombings and other attacks.

The most likely targets would not be military networks but commercial and civilian infrastructure—the computers that control transportation systems, financial networks, communications, and the like. Commercial systems are usually easier to dial into and less secure. Civilian operators are also less aware of hard-core computer warriors and terrorists.

Fortunately, there is time to prepare. Even more important, this is one area in which the military services, U.S. industry, civil libertarians, and the public all share common interests.

The technology and security measures that make it harder for cyberterrorists and computer warriors are the same measures that would protect the privacy of individuals and the safety of electronic commerce: strong encryption, easy-to-use security software, and better education about the threat.

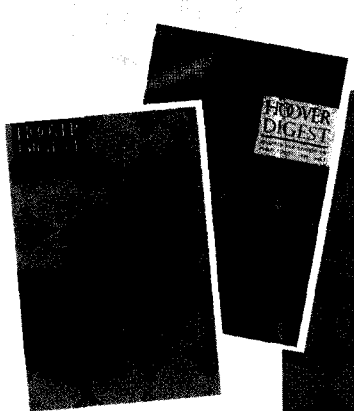
Everyone would be better off if we also had better planning that allowed businesses, the military, and law enforcement officials to work together. For this to happen, the public needs to be able to trust both government and industry—which means we need effective oversight.

Finally, **the government needs to adopt policies that let U.S. companies remain predominant in the global information economy.** It will be easier to fend off insider threats if more software and hardware are designed in the United States, not in some other countries one can think of.

In today's deregulated, global economy, information industry companies can set up shop almost anywhere. The United States needs policies that attract the best businesses and let them compete effectively. It has been said that computer warfare is the dark side of the information revolution. With a little effort, sensible policies, and good faith, we can prepare.

— *Bruce Berkowitz*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



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the mid-'90s, according to one top House Democratic aide, "one of the messages we got out of that is that ... you can't take Southern conservatives for granted and you have to spend time with them."

Now Gephardt meets with the Blue Dogs at least once a month. And everywhere you look a Blue Dog has a prominent role in presenting the House Democrats' agenda. Gephardt let Stenholm take the lead on the tax cut and made him a co-sponsor of the energy alternative. Blue Dog Marion Berry of Arkansas co-chairs the House Democrats' health care task force and was a lesser-known co-author of the original Ganske-Dingell-Norwood HMO reform bill that House Democrats promoted in vain. Of three co-chairs of the House Democrats' prescription-drug task force, two are Blue Dogs. And the Blue Dogs have been charged with gathering signatures to force another House vote on campaign finance. "They've been stuck to Dick Gephardt like glue, and that's been pretty surprising," says John Feehery, spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert. "They have just not wanted to play."

Bush, by contrast, seems to have practically given up on his supposed allies. The Blue Dogs have never been invited to the White House en masse. And early meetings between some members and Bush and Dick Cheney, according to Blue Dog co-chair Alan Boyd of Florida, were "mostly just photo-ops." "There's been no effort whatsoever to woo them," says a top House Democratic leadership aide. "They only come to us when they know what they're going to do and ask us to get on board," Stenholm complains. "We've got to be in on the take-off as well as the landing." Unless that changes, Bush's political fortunes may come crashing back to earth when Congress returns this fall. ■

White House Watch

Bolten the Door

By Ryan Lizza

The quickie newspaper accounts of President Bush's deal last week with Representative Charlie Norwood on the patients' bill of rights go something like this: Norwood arrived at the White House around five o'clock in the afternoon on August 1. He met with congressional lobbyist Nick Calio, Chief of Staff Andy Card, and Deputy Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten, who has handled relations with the Georgia congressman since February. Card and Bolten, sensing that Norwood was ready to commit, walked down the corridor to the Oval Office to brief Bush before Norwood was escorted inside, where he soon agreed to the outlines of a deal. Minutes later the beaming president and the haggard congressman were standing before the podium in the briefing room, announcing their compromise to the world. In the newspapers, that's where the story ends—with the president basking in the glow of his legislative coup.

But the White House's work was only beginning. A verbal agreement with the president was one thing; translating it into legislative language was quite another. That job was left to Bolten. Norwood left the White House to brief his bill's five co-sponsors on the deal at 7:30 p.m. on the Hill. It was not a comfortable meeting (an "ass-whipping" is how one Norwood aide describes it). But that was nothing compared with Norwood's next meeting. Later that night, on the third floor of the Capitol in a conference room above the speaker's office, Norwood, Bolten, Dennis Hastert's Chief of Staff Scott Palmer, and assorted staffers met to write the actual compromise amendment to Norwood's bill. Bolten came prepared with language—including clauses that allow the law to override certain state regulations of HMOs—that Norwood's team believes the congressman never agreed to with Bush.

The session, which ended around 5:30 a.m., turned extremely contentious. It was "hand-to-hand combat" says one person in the room. Bolten didn't budge. And Norwood's aides were aghast at the amendment that finally emerged. "Josh Bolten screwed us over," one bitterly complains. Now, as the bill moves to a House-Senate conference, Norwood's staff is trying to distance him from the compromise without being seen as breaking with the White House. On "Meet the Press" on Sunday, Norwood delicately backed away from parts of the deal: "I am concerned about the language," he said about the federal override. But it's too late. Bolten outmaneuvered the Georgia dentist and delivered Bush his biggest political victory since the tax cut. Says one top White House aide, "Josh has a side that, when the stakes are high and something has to be done very quickly, can be very tough, but that's to get an outcome for the president."

The anonymous fourth man in the inner circle of Bush's staff, Bolten is far less well-known than Andy Card, Karl Rove, or Karen Hughes. But, inside the White House, few doubt his importance. The three spheres of White House policy-making—Margaret La Montagne's Domestic Policy Council, Larry Lindsey's National Economic Council, and Condoleezza Rice's National Security Council—all report to him. Technically, Bolten is even Karl Rove's immediate superior. Since Bolten is the traffic cop for Bush's briefings, no policy matter comes before the president without his blessing. "The fact of the matter is that Josh has tremendous influence, but his fingerprints aren't always obvious," says a senior aide. Adds Calio, "Josh is a fairly quiet person in a lot of ways. He's got his hands in virtually everything at the White House, though. All policy matters report to him eventually."

Bolten has been at Bush's side since early 1999, when he signed on as the Bush campaign's policy director. He served a tour in Florida during the recount as one of Bush's top strategists, and when the Supreme Court released its decision in *Bush* v. *Gore*, Bolten was one of the first people Bush called to ask what the dense legal opinion actually meant. Bolten's West Wing office is just two doors down from Bush's, and he probably has more face time with the president than anyone except for Card. And, as Bush's first year has worn on, Bolten's role has only grown. In fact, his rise signals a subtle

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shift within the White House power structure—away from the Texans who understand Bush best and toward the Washington insiders who better understand the institution that has caused him such fits: Congress.

Bolten is a classic Beltway insider. Born in Washington in 1954, the son of a veteran CIA operative, he attended St. Albans, the same tony private school where Al Gore matriculated. After attending Princeton and Stanford Law School, he moved back to the District of Columbia, where he racked up an *über*-Washington resumé with stints at the State Department, a private law firm, the Senate Finance Committee, the U.S. trade representative's office, and, finally, the first Bush White House, where he worked in the legislative affairs shop. There, he toiled side by side with the very people who engineered Bush's latest victories on the patients' bill of rights and the energy bill. Calio was his boss. Card was the deputy chief of staff and then transportation secretary. And Bolten was hired at the suggestion of a legislative affairs staffer named Rob Portman, now an Ohio congressman who serves as Bush's eyes and ears in the House and who also played a key role in prying Norwood loose.

With Bush's agenda stalled in Congress, it was Bolten and his fellow insiders who rescued it. Although Rove helped pressure some wavering Republican members from New Jersey to support the Norwood-Bush compromise, he played a relatively minor role in the HMO fight. Hughes, meanwhile, fretted that Bush's veto threats would undermine his popularity. But Bolten and Calio urged the president to hang tough, and they were vindicated. The Bolten faction took the lead on the energy bill too. Says a Republican congressman, "Energy is the same way. The Texans did not play a big role in that. That was Cheney and Card and Bolten and Calio and the same crew. They are relying on the Washington people."

ONE REASON BOLTEN doesn't get much attention is that he's a synthesizer, and therefore it's often difficult to recognize his imprimatur or to define him ideologically. He is not, for instance, a movement conservative. When he graduated from law school in 1980, a year when young Republicans were flocking to Washington to tear down the federal government, Bolten spent a year in San Francisco clerking for Thelton Henderson, a liberal Carter appointee whom Tom DeLay wanted to impeach a few years ago. "He doesn't have a strong ideological streak. He's more pragmatic, and he's more willing to listen and weigh the various options," says a Republican congressman who knows him well. "He doesn't have any ideological ax to grind." Bolten reportedly supports some type of federal funding for stem-cell research and some kind of controls on carbon dioxide emissions. But his job is less to push his views on the president than to turn various people's ideas into coherent and defensible policy.

Still, Bolten's reticence is not only political; it's also characterological. Even coming off his patients' bill of rights win, he declined to be interviewed for this article and seemed to prefer that it not be written. (One White House press aide asked me, "There'd be no way he could talk you out of it?") He never goes on television, nor is he quoted in the press. When his name does appear in print, it is frequently misspelled ("Bolton"), even by members of the White House press corps. One of Bolten's former campaign policy staffers calls him the "epitome" of "the quiet competency" of the stereotypical Bushie. Says one top aide, "He's perfectly willing to let other people get credit for things."

But underneath his investment-banker exterior—he was a top executive with Goldman Sachs for five years—Bolten has an eccentric side. After more than a decade of Washington jobs, he briefly moved to California in the early '90s and worked at a winery. He owns two motorcycles—a Harley and a Victory—and rode in a "Bikers for Bush" parade during the Republican National Convention. At a campaign stop in early November, his good friend Bo Derek joined him for a spin. Bolten got to know the actress during the campaign when he briefed her before her public appearances on Bush's behalf. "The president calls him 'reverse sexy,'" says Calio. "You know, he's this nice-looking, quiet Jewish guy, and he's got Bo Derek. He's got that thing going with Bo Derek. Then I show up in his office one day, waiting for him, and Julia Ormond"—the stunning British actress who starred in *Legends of the Fall*—"walks out. She was there talking about refugees, I think." All of which makes you wonder: Bolten is smart, has a good sense of humor and Hollywood connections, and is helping Bush rack up his biggest victories. Might not be a bad idea to stick him in front of a camera once in a while. ■

The GOP finds its feminine side.

Girl Crazy

By MICHELLE COTTLE

"WE DON'T LIKE to be called 'gals,'" vice presidential daughter Liz Cheney informed me when I called to talk about the GOP's "Winning Women" campaign, the party's latest push for female voters. Ouch. Who knew conservative broads were so touchy?

But the next morning, over a jumbo iced latte at Starbucks, the disarmingly charming Cheney—who's spearheading the effort along with White House aide Lezlee Westine, vice presidential adviser Mary Matalin, and Republican National Committee co-chair Ann Wagner—assured me that she had only been teasing. In fact, according to Cheney, the GOP believes you should speak to women exactly the same way you talk to that other gender. "I find it really offensive when people in either party talk about 'women's issues,'" says Cheney. It's a formulation, she says, that "kind of denigrates women"—and one for which Republicans have long criticized the hypersensitive, P.C. Democrats. Thus, you will not hear the leaders of Winning Women pandering on day care and education while the boys discuss smaller taxes and

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bigger guns in the other room.

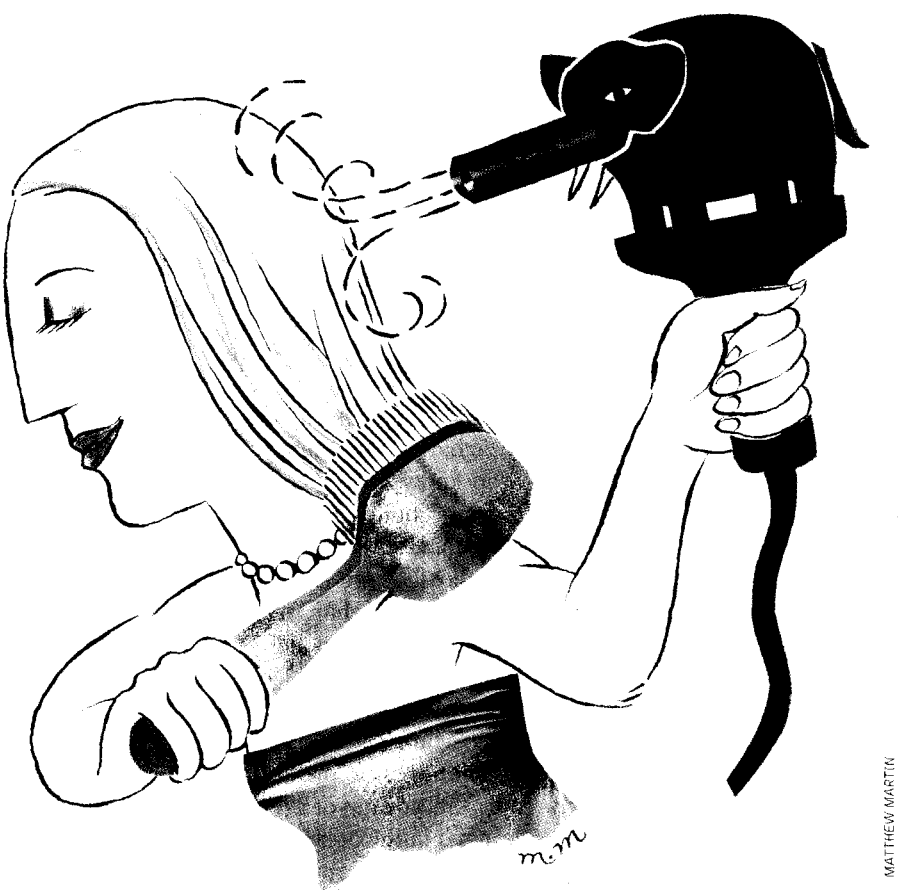
Unfortunately, that's because Winning Women seems intent on ignoring *all* issues and focusing on packaging instead. The campaign is draped in pastels, decorated with family photos, peppered with language like "Bush's Power Puff Girls" and "A Woman Who Knows Who She Is." If you think Democrats are annoying when they talk about women's issues, just wait till you see what happens when Republicans don't.

As long as there has been a gender gap, there have been Republicans claiming that the party "just needs to communicate its message better." In 1984 Sonia Landau, head of Women for Reagan-Bush, gushed to *The New York Times* that "President Reagan is terrific on women's issues and we just have to get his record to the people." In 1997 Republican Representative Jennifer Dunn told *National Journal*: "Often we do explain our policies in a manner that doesn't connect with women." (That year, the GOP's wooing program was called the Power of Women Effecting Renewal—POWER.) So Liz Cheney is in good company when, this time around, she reflects: "I think we have a really good message for women, and I don't think we've gotten it out as effectively as we could."

"Getting it out effectively" has traditionally meant draping Republican ideology in XX-chromosome imagery—a tradition Winning Women boldly takes into the Internet age. The campaign's homepage—with its pastel palette and flowery typeface—is straight out of *Martha Stewart Living*. While the "Issues" page offers an exhaustive list of the ways in which the Bush tax plan might benefit families, children, and chicks, the "In the News" page is a thinking woman's nightmare. In the first weeks after Winning Women's July launch, the page spotlighted four stories: "President Pays Tribute to Katharine Graham," "White House Staff Makes Family a Priority," "Laura Bush Widely Popular," and "The New First Lady's Quiet Strength." Even one of the more substantive pieces, a *New York Times* profile of National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, was dramatically dumbed down before being posted. Passages about Rice's education, her work as provost at Stanford University, her role in the Bush campaign, and her views on foreign policy were edited out, presumably to focus attention on those charming little personal details women really care about: "[Rice] eats either a bagel or cereal every day for breakfast. She is always impeccably dressed, usually in a classic suit with a modest hemline, comfortable pumps and conservative jewelry. She keeps two mirrors on her desk at Stanford, apparently to check the back as well as the front of her hair."

In addition to convincing the ladies that Republicans understand their style, Winning Women is determined to show them just how many babes grace the party's upper echelons. "I've seen some focus group results that showed that people have the impression that the Clinton administration had more women in key positions than this administration," says a distressed Cheney. "That's not true." Thus, Cheney, Wagner, and a variety of administration women will soon be crisscrossing the country, speaking at events aimed to show how girl-powered the GOP really is. The officials will discuss the personal side of being a high-powered Republican woman, and already Wagner has been running around flogging her Everywoman soccer-mom status to anyone who'll listen.

Is trotting out spokeswomen and feminine imagery less patronizing than discussing stereotypical "women's issues"? Maybe, maybe not; but it's certainly less effective. It's all well and good to say that, politically, women believe the same things as men do and that Republican ideology will appeal to them just as much as it appeals to men—except that they don't, and it doesn't. Poll after poll shows that women focus more on the environment, health care, education, and, yes, day care—while men fret more about taxes and defense. And those same polls show that a majority of women think the Democratic Party does a better job on their issues—which presumably has something to do with the fact that Democrats want more spending and more regulation, not simply because party leaders sport the latest styles from Ann Taylor. Cheney, however, remains undaunted. "I think we have a good story to tell on the environment—a good story," she says. "Look at the president's energy plan—how much of that is conservation." Yes, most women probably would consider that a good story. ■



MATTHEW MARTIN

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Nashville Dispatch

Radio City

By Jason Zengerle

Nashville may be the country-music capital of the world, but on the city's local airwaves, two talk-radio deejays share the title of king. Steve Gill, a former University of Tennessee basketball player and two-time Republican congressional candidate, works the morning-drive shift on WTN-FM. Phil Valentine, who boasts of having been the TV announcer for the Judds' farewell tour, holds court during the afternoon rush hour on WLAC-AM. With their Limbaughian voices and Limbaughian views, the two men are Nashville celebrities. But no one, Gill and Valentine included, knew just how powerful the two talk-show hosts were until last month, when they incited thousands of their listeners to storm the State Capitol.

On July 12 the Tennessee General Assembly was preparing to vote on a final budget. For five months legislators had grappled with how to respond to an $880 million budget shortfall. And, as the longest legislative session in state history wound down, it appeared that legislators had reluctantly agreed to pass a bare-bones budget that made up the shortfall by slashing state spending and using one-time revenues—such as the money from the federal tobacco settlement—to pay recurring expenses. But, in a last-ditch effort to avoid such a budget, a few legislators proposed a state income tax—which Tennessee, along with eight other states, currently lacks. At 4:20 p.m., Marsha Blackburn, a Republican state senator from suburban Nashville, got wind of the income tax effort. And, from the Senate floor, she fired off an urgent e-mail to her secretary titled "TIME FOR TROOPS." Three minutes later, she followed it with another: "income tax vote should be around 5. need support if they want to stop it."

Blackburn's secretary knew exactly what to do: She called Valentine and Gill. Valentine, who was about an hour and a half into his daily politics show on WLAC, immediately urged his listeners to rush to the State Capitol. Gill, who'd been off the air for about seven hours, cut in on George "Plasmo" Plaster's "Sportsnight" show on WTN, telling the city's Tennessee Titans fans to put aside their football concerns and head downtown. "We need *everyone* to turn out and turn out now," Gill implored. "We need all the listeners on WTN to come down and help us finish this thing off and kill this income tax!"

Shortly before five o'clock, the first protesters arrived at the Capitol. Soon about 200 entered the Greek revival building, roaming its stately marble halls and chanting, "No means no" and "No taxes, no taxes." Most of the protesters were well-behaved, witnesses said, but a sizable minority spat on legislators and state employees who were walking through the halls; others yelled "Go back to Russia, you Commies!" When they arrived at the Senate chamber, the protesters began banging on the doors and chanting louder. Meanwhile, new arrivals continued streaming onto the plaza in front of the Capitol. Valentine and Gill, who had raced to the Capitol themselves, broadcast live reports on the radio, and, as news crews began to arrive from local TV stations, Gill went from camera to camera to encourage more people to head downtown. To prevent additional protesters from entering the Capitol, state troopers eventually barred the building's doors. But that only made the 2,000-strong crowd on the Capitol steps angrier: Protesters broke two windows as they pounded on the doors; someone threw a rock that crashed through a window of the governor's office.

Gill and Valentine insist that what transpired was simply a raucous rally akin to the Boston Tea Party. Others, though, called it a mob, citing the Bastille as a more appropriate historical precedent. In either case, the protest had the intended effect: The income tax plan was abandoned, and later that evening the General Assembly passed a budget that provided no new taxes. The protest, Democratic Senator Roscoe Dixon explained to *The Tennessean*, "created an unfriendly environment where you have concern for your members. I wouldn't have voted for the budget otherwise. I thought it was just best before somebody got hurt ... I thought it was best to adjourn and go home." Or, as Republican Senator Don Fowler, an income tax opponent, told Gill on his morning show the next day, "I was afraid somebody might get shot."

Such are the dynamics of Tennessee's income tax debate—where the sides are divided more by temperament than by party. In fact, the state's leading income tax proponent is its Republican governor, Don Sundquist. Though he opposed an income tax in his 1994 and 1998 gubernatorial campaigns, Sundquist changed his mind in 1999, not long after being sworn in to his second (and, thanks to term limits, final) term. And with good reason. Even with a booming economy, Tennessee at the time faced a projected deficit of nearly $400 million: The state's 6 percent sales tax—which accounted for 57 cents of every state tax dollar collected—was simply not generating enough revenue. So Sundquist proposed ambitious tax reforms, calling for a 3.75 percent state income tax and a lowering of the state's sales tax to 3.75 percent (while eliminating the sales tax on groceries altogether). The plan would have made Tennessee's highly regressive tax structure at least modestly progressive; but, in a special legislative session Sundquist called that fall, the Democrat-controlled General Assembly refused to go along with any income tax. The next year, with Sundquist still pushing for an income tax, the General Assembly passed a budget without one. Sundquist vetoed it, and the General Assembly overrode his veto.

But Gill and Valentine have been the biggest sticks in the spokes. When Sundquist first announced his plan, the two deejays (both of whom were then working at WLAC) gave out the governor's phone number and urged their listeners to call his office and to voice their displeasure. Then Gill and Valentine went after legislators. "We said, 'OK, Rep-

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resentative Joe Davis is who we're hearing is a guy who's kind of a swing vote, so his number is seven-four-one-whatever,'" Gill recalls, "and the phone lines would just light up on these guys. And we actually had legislators calling the show going, 'I'm a no! I'm a no! Tell these people to quit calling me.'" Eventually, Gill and Valentine suggested a more dramatic gesture, advising their anti-income-tax listeners to drive to the Capitol and lay on their car horns. "If we cannot make them listen," the deejays would say, "we can force them to hear."

To hear Gill tell it, the income tax fight is as much about government accountability as government finance. Holding court off the air in WTN's studio near the Grand Ole Opry, Gill complains that there's never been a real public debate on the income tax. Since Sundquist changed his own view on the subject, he has dismissed income tax critics as "stupid." Pro-income tax legislators have repeatedly tried to bring it to a vote without warning—as they did on July 12—leaving little time for discussion. "If it's good public policy," Gill says, "why do they keep doing this thing in private, why can't they do it in public? They just keep trying to slip it through."

While Gill would undoubtedly oppose an income tax regardless, he actually has a point. Like many Southern states, Tennessee's government has been extremely slow to modernize. And while the state has made great strides in improving and increasing its services in recent years—overhauling health care and education bureaucracies and now trying to reform the tax system—its politicians have ironically relied on the tactics of a bygone era to do so. Sundquist is right that Tennessee needs an income tax, but he hasn't made a persuasive public case for it. Instead, he and his allies, in Old South style, have focused on twisting arms and making backroom deals in the State Capitol (where things are so frozen in time that people are still allowed to smoke in the building). All of which has offered the perfect foil for talk-radio populism. As Valentine puts it, "I've had several people come to me who want me to run for governor. And you know what? I'm more effective where I am now. I can do more good for the things I believe in by being out here. It's obvious by who's winning this thing, the governor or talk radio. I think it's very obvious talk radio is winning."

AFTER THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY passed its bare-bones, no-income-tax budget on July 12, Sundquist vetoed it. So on August 7, the legislators returned to the State Capitol—and so did hundreds of protesters. This time the police were taking no chances, and dozens of khaki-clad Tennessee state troopers formed a protective ring around the Capitol; a state police helicopter circled overhead. ("I feel like I'm in Genoa," a local TV newsman quipped.) Gill and Valentine were there, too—Gill broadcasting from 5:30 in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon, Valentine hitting the airwaves from three o'clock in the afternoon on. Not that anyone could hear much over the passing cars blowing their horns in solidarity.

At 4:30 in the afternoon, Gill, who had stuck around after his show went off the air, got a call on his cell phone saying that the General Assembly had voted to override Sundquist's veto, thereby restoring the July 12 budget. He rushed over to Valentine, still in the middle of his own show, to give him the news, which Valentine announced on the air. The crowd of protesters cheered and began chanting "No more taxes." But the celebration was short-lived, as talk quickly turned to the next round: Sundquist, as he had done before, would likely call the General Assembly back for a special session in the fall to consider the income tax again.

Gill and Valentine, though, aren't worried about losing steam. "It's been 'All tax, all the time' on our show," Gill told me earlier. "A little while ago we tried to branch out a bit, and we did some stuff on Chandra Levy.... And we got a call or two, but then people started calling and saying, 'Yeah, let me know when they find her. Now, back to taxes.' We can talk about this forever." ■

Tallinn Dispatch

Western Union

By BENJAMIN SMITH

UNTIL HIS RESIGNATION, Igor Grazin was considered something of a political has-been in Estonia. As an MP in the Supreme Soviet (the USSR's legislature) in the late 1980s, he was a key player in the Baltic nation's fight for independence from Moscow and was later elected to the Estonian parliament. But since then he had slipped into obscurity as a sometime Notre Dame professor and adviser to the speaker of his country's parliament. This May, however, the diminutive academic found himself in the headlines once again when he was forced out by parliament for calling on Estonia to suspend its plans to join the European Union. "We are getting ready to jump on this train just because tickets are available," says Grazin, whose anti-EU statement was co-signed by nine other politicians and intellectuals. "We don't even know where the train is going."

To date, the debate over enlarging the EU has been largely about whether the rich nations of Western Europe will invite their poorer, ex-Communist neighbors into the fold. Can the Germans tolerate a flood of Polish workers? Can the Spanish give up their subsidies? "Don't try to expand Europe without consulting the people," admonished a July op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune*. The "people" it referred to, needless to say, were the Germans, Spaniards, and so on—not the more than 100 million Eastern Europeans the EU may soon take in.

But someone may want to consult these people, too, because the greater threat to EU enlargement could come from the East, where, unexpectedly, enthusiasm for a united Europe is starting to wane. Polish support for joining the EU

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has declined from 80 percent in 1994 to 55 percent today. Czech support stands at 45 percent, and Latvians are evenly divided. (The only countries truly enthusiastic about joining are those least likely to be asked: 86 percent of Bulgarians support the idea, as do 79 percent of Croats.) But nowhere is opposition as strong as in tiny Estonia, where polls have generally shown that most people believe the country has a better chance of continuing its post-Soviet success without the EU's help.

IF ESTONIA'S DISENCHANTMENT with the EU is unanticipated, it is partly because it has been the EU's prize student. Estonia's capital, Tallinn, is bursting with foreign investment. Estonia's citizens are the wealthiest in the former Soviet Union, largely thanks to trade with neighboring Finland, an EU member. Estonia was the only former Soviet republic among the first wave of countries invited to begin EU admission talks in 1998, and it now shares first place with Slovenia in the race to settle final negotiating points. The country is poised to hold a referendum in 2003 on joining the EU, potentially entering in time for the 2004 elections to the European Parliament. Estonia's government, along with every major political party, favors joining the EU.

But Estonia's politicians are increasingly out of touch with their constituents. Once confined to the rural poor, Euroskepticism has lately been rising everywhere, including among the pro-capitalist urban elite. (A poll this spring showed that support for joining the EU was dropping especially fast among wealthy Estonians.) The rising skepticism in Estonia—and across Eastern Europe more generally—has three main causes: sovereignty, economy, and security.

The first concern sometimes shocks Western Europeans: In the former Soviet bloc, the word "union" evokes bad memories. Moscow ruled Estonia for 50 years, and many Estonians worry about surrendering any of their hard-won sovereignty to another supranational body headquartered far away. Estonia would simply be moving "from one union to another," says Uno Silberg, chairman of the country's "'No' to the European Union" movement.

Absurd as the analogy may seem to EU officials, it has struck a chord. The blue flag of the Estonian Euroskeptic Movement shows the EU's twelve yellow stars encircling a hammer and sickle. Its publicity materials include a chart with 14 areas of alleged similarity between the EU and the USSR—for example, likening Interpol to the Soviet security organs. (Similarly, in neighboring Latvia, another former Soviet republic, a nationalist youth group occasionally plasters the streets with posters bearing the formula EU=USSR.)

Estonians' economic concerns are also framed by their experience with the Soviet Union. Estonia boasts one of the world's least regulated economies and ranks higher than most EU member states on the Heritage Foundation's anti-regulation Index of Economic Freedom. In this free-market paradise, it's perhaps not surprising that some view the EU as quasi-socialist. "A planned economy has to expand," Grazin says with a flourish. "The EU needs Estonia like Karl Marx needed the world."

Fears that the increased regulation accompanying EU membership could hurt Estonia's economy transcend class and ideological divisions. Poor, rural farmers fear they won't be able to meet European hygiene standards and can't compete with the cheap mass production techniques of the West. They also fear the projected increase in some low-end consumer prices as the cost of production rises. (Similarly, many Poles who live near Germany worry that their real estate might be purchased wholesale by wealthier Germans, who are currently barred from buying land in Poland.)

Estonia's business elite is also worried. Real estate developers wince at EU fire and building codes. Estonians doing business with Russia and the United States worry about the EU's tariff system. And employers face a package of workplace regulations—from paid vacations to health and safety standards—designed in countries whose average per capita gross domestic product is almost three times their own. These concerns have crystallized on the editorial page of Estonia's influential pink business daily, *Aripaev*. To the immense frustration of politicians and EU officials in Tallinn, *Aripaev*'s editorial board has maintained a staunchly Euro-skeptical line. "For the last ten years, Estonian business and society have been very open. Now with the EU there is one rule, a second rule, a third rule," complains Meelis Mandel, *Aripaev*'s news editor.

Until recently, these vague sovereignty and prospective economic concerns were dwarfed by a consideration that weighed heavily in the EU's favor: security. The Baltics remain terrified of Russian revanchism. Estonia's Ministry of Defense is hard at work preparing a radar system for its Russian border, and the country's new army has acquired light arms from its Nordic neighbors for a Chechnya-style defense of its territory—just in case. Membership in the EU has long been seen as offering "soft" security—diplomatic, if not military, protection from the unpredictable giant next door. But lately the Bush administration has undercut this argument by dropping strong hints, notably in Warsaw this June, that the Baltic states are in the running for a 2002 invitation to join NATO—a "hard" security guarantee that would render the EU's soft one unnecessary.

Senior EU officials now say privately that they are worried about dwindling public support in Estonia. But Estonia is not their only problem: Anti-EU sentiment is popping up across the region at all levels. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has begun talking about "life outside the EU." A hit Latvian pop song begins: "Europe will not understand us." And the polls keep slipping.

The hidden beneficiary of all this burgeoning Euroskepticism may be the United States. Many Central and Eastern Europeans are already more comfortable with America, which they admire for its cold war leadership, than with the EU, which they associate with European socialism. And if Tallinn (or Warsaw, or Riga, or Prague) spurns the EU, they will rely all the more on close relations with Washington. The irony is that Washington is actively encouraging Estonia and its neighbors to join the EU. Perhaps it's because, as the State Department says, America thinks membership will stabilize them politically and boost them economically. Or perhaps it's because America wants Estonia's security and prosperity to be Europe's problem, not our own. ■

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How Laura Bush conquered feminism.

Portrait of a Lady

By SARAH WILDMAN

ON AN OPPRESSIVELY humid day in late July, a slew of female aides in Crayola-colored suits scurry under the stained-glass windows of Georgetown University's Gaston Hall. They are preparing for the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development, a conference highlighting "First Lady Laura Bush's Education Initiatives." An hour and a half after the media arrive, Laura Bush steps up to the podium. Wearing a candy-apple-red suit and speaking in her confident Texas drawl, she recites letters she and the president have received from kids desperate to learn, telling the audience that "the years from the crib to the classroom represent a period of intense language and cognitive growth." And then, her introduction complete, the first lady steps aside—and says nary a word for the rest of the conference. For nine hours over two days, the speakers discuss the intricacies of early learning, an issue with which the first lady has identified herself more than any other. But Laura doesn't interject a comment, raise an objection, or even ask a question. She listens in silence.

It's a strange way to host a conference. But then, over the last few decades, the position of first lady has become an awfully strange job. Historically, the role was largely private. Neither Bess Truman nor Mamie Eisenhower gave political speeches, press conferences, or radio broadcasts—let alone presided over televised conferences on education policy. Indeed, while Bess slunk off unimpeded to pout in Independence and Mamie spent thousands of dollars on the first couple's retreat in Gettysburg, Laura Bush crinkled brows across the capital when she spent two weeks early in her husband's presidency buying linens for the family's Crawford ranch. Increased media scrutiny accounts for part of the shift, but so does feminism. Today most Americans expect the first lady to have a public persona: to have independent talents and issues that she pursues for the good of the country. Even the National Federation of Republican Women wouldn't accept a first lady like Mamie, who boasted that "Ike runs the country and I turn the lamb chops."

But this has made the job harder, not easier. Before feminism, it was brutally constricting; today it's simply impossible. The twenty-first century first lady must be poised. Polished but not slick. Accessible but not intimate. Smart but not ambitious. Motivated, interested, an advocate—but never political. Beautiful but uncaring about her appearance. *Happy*. She must retain her own identity but negate it where it diverges from her husband's. And if a first lady appears unhappy with those requirements, even a little, she weakens the administration and is pilloried not only by its enemies but by its friends.

Laura Bush resolves this conundrum by filling all these contradictory expectations simultaneously. Or, more accurately, by allowing them to fill her. Depending on whose account you read, she's a quiet intellectual, a career woman, a stay-at-home mom, a teacher, an empowered woman, or a society wife. She was deeply committed to her career as an educator and felt no pressure to marry; yet she left the classroom more than two decades ago without a backward glance. She is an intellectual—a voracious reader—yet she appears to have no dark, subversive, or even complex thoughts. She is totally fulfilled by her husband, although he seems uninterested in, or ignorant of, her intellectual and literary pursuits. She is passionate about education yet offers no opinions that don't shadow her husband's. She is the Play-Doh first lady: Mold her into whatever shape you want, then stamp her back down into a pile of putty for her next audience. Is it a pleasant existence? Probably not. It's certainly not an honest one. But for a public figure absurdly caught between society's conflicting notions of what women should be, it's a way to survive.

FIRST LADIES WEREN'T always forced into such contortions. Until 1960 the first lady was important for social functions, for rearing the first family, and for presenting the president as a family man. But she wasn't required, or allowed, to be outspoken about issues. The job was never enjoyable; Martha Washington called herself a "state prisoner." But it was straightforward.

Eleanor Roosevelt was an exception: FDR's disability helped make her an essential part of the White House operation. But with Bess Truman and Mamie Eisenhower, the first lady's role became private once again. It was not until 1960 that an administration discovered the first lady's public relations potential. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy provided glamour, family connections, and a multilingual education to a family that, for all its wealth, still craved old-money respectability. Her disdain for the average American would have ruined her in today's media maelstrom—witness the backlash against Nancy Reagan when she tried to follow Jackie's example 20 years later. But in an era when life in the White House was the subject more of curiosity than of scrutiny—and when the presidency itself inspired awe, not casual derision—Jackie was worshiped. Thousands copied her hair and clothing styles. When she refurbished the White House, showcasing historic preservation and the arts, she won accolades. She performed "woman's work," albeit a soci-

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ety woman's work, and, for an America just waking up from the 1950s, that was enough.

But, as the '60s wore on, conventional notions of femininity gave way to feminism, and it was only a matter of time before those changed expectations infiltrated the White House. Increasingly, first ladies had to twist themselves into knots to meet modern ideas of what women could be, without exceeding the traditional bounds still enforced by large swaths of society—all under the increasingly intrusive eye of the public. Lady Bird Johnson, the first to try on this role, may have fared the best. Lady Bird's "actions rarely sparked criticism or controversy," writes Myra Gutin in *The President's Partner: The First Lady in the Twentieth Century*. "However, even though she did advocate projects that were safe, and was not an initiator, these criticisms are tempered by all that she did accomplish." She is widely cited as a catalyst for the modern environmental movement, and she pushed Lyndon subtly to the left. "Man, Lady Bird was just shrewd," sighs George Washington University Professor Allida Black. "She lobbied people behind the scenes and played a key role in Head Start as well as a crucial role in keeping the South in line after Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act." The first first lady to campaign without her husband, Lady Bird braved a whistle-stop tour of the South at a moment when her husband's programs were least popular. Lady Bird spoke of her "Southern birth, kinfolk, and memories" while pleading that it would be a "bottomless tragedy for our country to be racially divided."

VICTOR JUHASZ

Still, Lady Bird's outspoken defense of her husband's policies was tolerated precisely because they were *his* policies. A president who can't control his wife is seen as a president who can't control the country, as soon became apparent. In the summer of 1975, Betty Ford, in an interview on "60 Minutes," spoke frankly about sex, her relationship with her husband, drugs, abortion, and her children. Asked what she would do if her teenage daughter, Susan, had "an affair," the first lady said she "wouldn't be surprised" because "she's a perfectly normal human being like all young girls, and if she wanted to continue I would certainly counsel and advise her on the subject." The first lady admitted "all" her children had "tried marijuana" and that she probably would have, too, had she come of age in the '70s. Later that summer, the first lady told *McCall's* magazine that she wanted to have sex "as often as possible" and boasted that she "got a woman in the Cabinet" and was "working on getting a woman on the Supreme Court." "Mrs. Ford's candor may have killed her husband's chances of winning in 1976," writes historian Gil Troy in *Mr. and Mrs. President: From the Trumans to the Clintons*.

Rosalynn Carter came to the White House determined to be an activist first lady—particularly on mental health issues. But by then feminism's advance had made the balance between advocacy and wifely duties all but untenable. After Rosalynn toured Latin America on behalf of her husband in 1977, Judy Woodruff, then of NBC, sniffed, "You were handed an assignment simply because you were the wife of the president—isn't that kind of a setback for the women's movement?" Rosalynn was stuck: not feminist enough for feminists, too feminist for those who feared them. Her presence in Cabinet meetings provoked harsh criticism: When the president fired several of his Cabinet members in midsummer 1979, Rosalynn's defense of the purge prompted Republicans to dub her "Lady Macbeth," as though she were responsible for the shake-up. To defuse the situation, Rosalynn defensively told *The Washington Post*: "I sat in on the meetings. I don't say 'Do this' or 'Do that.' I don't ever do that to him. We just discuss things. I'm a wife. I like to know what's happening. I have never been interested in detail of policy and legislation." Her image as an adviser, she insisted, was "exaggerated."

Ultimately, of course, it was Hillary Clinton who exposed the agony of the office. After eight years and innumerable versions of Hillary Clinton, one sentiment can be distilled from every profile written about the former first lady: a distinct sense of discomfort. Too much of a feminist to be just a presidential accessory, she was a dubious feminist icon all the same. After staunchly retaining her maiden name for the first half of her professional career, she suddenly—and expediently—let it slip into second place behind her husband's,

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where it disappeared and reappeared throughout her husband's tenure in public office. Changing her image, her motivations, and her title (partner? co-president? first lady?) left her open to attack. No one knew quite what to do with her. The first first lady with a graduate degree, refusing to back away from a life of accomplishments? Or a battered and torn tarpaulin, badly shielding her husband's indiscretions?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the outgoing first lady and the incoming one was painfully obvious at their meeting in December: Hillary in her now-trademark black pantsuit, Laura in a terrible purple plaid number, looking like nothing so much as country mouse. When Laura later announced that the two women spoke about "everything" from "closets to ways to raise children in the White House," some interpreted it as a sign that the role of first lady was being returned to its pre-Hillary, pre-feminist roots. But it's not that simple. Much as they would deny it, Laura and the people around her are careful not to stray too far from the trail Hillary blazed. "Laura is inching toward a third way," says historian Troy; she's "not a feminist first lady but also isn't quite the throwback. She somehow exudes confidence and power, [which] makes it difficult to caricature her as some kind of dishrag first lady. That's where she's succeeded."

This carefully managed image of Laura Bush begins with a core, undisputed narrative, related in nearly every media profile by the same set of family friends and White House insiders. The daughter of a homemaker and a homebuilder, Laura hails from "unpretentious folks" in Midland, Texas, where children ran in the street until twilight, when they returned home to unlocked doors. Laura's was a storybook upbringing marred only, as all have breathlessly reported, by an eerie brush with death not long after her seventeenth birthday. (She ran a stop sign, inadvertently killing a friend.) Not long after, Laura left Midland for Southern Methodist University, where she was part of the "cusp" generation whose rebellion went no further than smoking Winstons and wearing peasant blouses. She then spent ten years teaching, earning a graduate degree in library science, and ostensibly not caring if she married or not.

It's an ideal setup: blank. Just enough to feel like she's within reach, not nearly enough to pin her down. And from there, profilers are allowed—indeed encouraged—to see in Laura Bush whatever they see lacking in her husband. Listen to Bush adviser Karl Rove, gushing to *Vogue*: "[W]hat people don't realize is that this is a woman of enormous strength. You have to be, I suspect, to be married to a Bush." In this telling, Laura is not an incidental but an essential ingredient of the Bush political machine. W., we're told, would never have made it to the White House without Laura's down-home insistence that he choose her or the bottle. She's the frontier wife, a babe on each hip, telling the man she fiercely loves that he better put down that Jack Daniels or walk right out that door. W.'s history of carousing and clowning (not so terribly unlike her second graders) was smoothed, "mellowed," by Laura—a role she has continued to play, according to her part-time biographers, in the White House. "Bushieeeee," she'll say with a warning lilt if his clowning goes too far. We heard it in her speech at the Republican convention when applause from the floor went on too long. "That's enough," Laura said sternly to her flock. Ah, we can all sigh. Laura will keep her mothering hand on our teenage president.

Yet equally important is Laura's demure refusal to confirm her centrality to the story—which leaves its true import open to interpretation, softening the image for those who might read it as a sign of presidential weakness or hidden female authority. "The ultimatum was an exaggeration," she told *Harper's Bazaar*. "I think that was a joke.... [W]hen somebody gives up drinking, they're the ones who do it; they're the ones who deserve the credit." The *Bazaar* piece subtly shifts the iconography of this first lady back to a supporting role. In it, Doro Koch, W.'s sister, confirms, "She teases him a lot. She'll say, 'You're completely wrong.' She'll correct him, but not seriously." Adds Lynne Cheney, "She has no compulsion to put all of her accomplishments on the table.... She doesn't feel a need to be anybody but who she is."

It's all part of the balancing act: a strong mothering figure but not just a mother, a traditional wife but also a contemporary woman. When Katie Couric asked Laura, within hours of the inauguration, if she was a "very traditional woman," Laura balked. "I don't think that's really exactly fair," she responded, "I've had traditional—jobs that were traditionally women's jobs.... I had the luxury of staying home and raising my children.... That was really what I wanted to do, was to be at home with them. But I also think that I've been a very contemporary woman in a lot of ways. I had a career for a number of years. I didn't marry George until I was in my thirties. I worked on issues always that are very, very important to me, either working as a teacher or librarian or working as a volunteer or working as the first lady of my state. And so I think I'm both ways."

Both ways, indeed. Although she was a stay-at-home mom, the Bush camp reminds reporters at every turn that Laura spent ten years in the classroom. "One of the things we really admire about Mrs. Bush," Noelia Rodriguez, Laura's press secretary, told CNN last week, "is that she's very much a contemporary woman. She had a career before she was married. She married ... in her early thirties, then had her children later." Phrases like "a teacher by training" are often tacked to Laura's name, simultaneously providing feminine bona fides and a weightiness the Bush camp appears to think "housewife" and "full-time mom" do not. It seems to have worked. Paul Burka, who profiled Laura for *Texas Monthly*, told Chris Matthews in April that, even though "she hasn't taught anything for years and years," teaching is a "big deal to her." Laura herself has told interviewers that "I've always done what traditional women do" but adds that she's also done what she "always wanted." In other words, nothing forced her to abandon her career for domesticity. She *chose* to.

THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, is that when you line up all these statements side by side, they conflict. By all accounts, it was Laura Bush's dream to teach. "Growing up, I practiced teaching on my dolls," she told Cokie Roberts in May, using the same line she employed at the Republican

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convention in August. "I'd line them up in rows for the day's lessons. Years later, our daughters did the same thing. We used to joke that the Bush family had the best-educated dolls in America." It's an anecdote recounted in a dozen profiles, all highlighting Laura's lifelong commitment to education. Indeed, according to the profiles, she never worried during her professional days about being a 30-year-old single woman in a conservative Texas town. "I never once heard her say, 'I wish I could find someone I wanted to marry,'" her oldest friend, Regan Gammon, told *The Washington Post* during the campaign. Her work was enough. But when she met George W. (marrying him a mere three months later), she gave up teaching faster than her former students emptied the classroom at the final bell. And she hasn't regretted her decision for an instant because, as a housewife, she has been utterly fulfilled.

And that's not the only perplexity. Consider another image beneficial to the Bush camp: Laura as a sophisticate, a cosmopolitan. She backpacked through 17 countries the year after college, we are informed; in subsequent years she has spent countless hours in museums and libraries. On her first trip to Europe as first lady, she was reportedly enraptured by her encounters with centuries-old books. Her comments to the rector of a library in Belgium—"It's so beautiful. I am myself a librarian, so I love libraries in particular"—were among the few made public to her waiting media entourage. British newspapers, anticipating the first couple's second tour, dug around and discovered that Laura had spent the summer of 1971 in England on a teaching exchange trip.

Again, it's a politically useful tableau. She is someone who, one would think, would otherwise not find George W. compelling. (Can you picture W. spending time in a library anywhere, let alone in a country where most of the books aren't in English?) Ergo, if Laura finds George W. fulfilling, he must have something more to offer than the bumbling, parochial presentation we see day to day. Her years immersed in the Western canon subtly counteract the image of her husband as shallow and glib. As Dan Quayle showed, it is critical that a male politician suspected of being dim-witted not have a dim-witted wife. And yet, for all the seriousness that Laura's reading brings to her husband's persona, she never expresses a controversial or sophisticated idea about the great books she has thought so much about. She is a deep thinker utterly free of the dark angst or subversive notions that might come from such contemplation. Take her favorite moment in literature, the "Grand Inquisitor" chapter of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Asked about this ambiguous and unsettling passage—in which Christ returns to earth only to be arrested as a heretic and threatened with burning at the stake—Laura replied bafflingly, "It's about life, and it's about death, and it's about Christ. I find it really reassuring."

But it is when Laura Bush makes her tepid forays into the world of policy and politics that the tension between her competing images—between the conflicting expectations that so bedeviled her predecessors—is most salient. She has called herself a "Republican by marriage," even admitting to Oprah Winfrey that, had she not married "43," she has "wondered if [she] would have voted for the first President Bush—number 41." Like all Laura propaganda, it's a carefully planned admission, allowing us a false sense of intimacy. It shouts to soccer moms: Her husband's policies may make us shudder, but the pillow talk in the living quarters tempers the man.

Or does it? In a "Today" show interview last January, Laura expressed support for leaving *Roe* v. *Wade* untouched. Many liberals were relieved, interpreting her admission as a white flag to pro-choice Americans. (It took years for Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush to reveal the same inclination.) But, queried on that ostensibly candid moment, she has retreated from any suggestion that her personal views matter. She told Oprah that she and George W. "agree on nearly every issue." Pressed further, Laura assured America that the first couple "never sit around and discuss policy" because "the last thing George wants to do is come home and talk about politics with me after he has talked about that all day." When Paula Zahn asked Laura, "What's the best advice you think you've given your husband since you've come to Washington?" Laura demurred with a silly, unlikely nonanswer that surely pleased the conservative audience on Fox News: "Let's see, I don't know. Cut his hair or something. I don't give him a lot of advice. I don't want him to give me a lot of advice. We don't really give each other a lot of advice. I hope that we give each other a lot more support than advice." To Wolf Blitzer she said, "I think wives have to be just a little bit careful about giving their husbands all of their opinions."

On education, Laura has cultivated the role of public advocate, burnishing her husband's reputation as someone personally committed to the issue. This in turn has led her to endorse such unassailable projects as Teach for America, Reading Is Fundamental, and Troops to Teachers. But Bush's budget proposed eliminating federal funding for Reading Is Fundamental—and Laura, of course, expressed no dissent. Members of Teach for America, angered by education budget cuts, wore anti-Laura stickers at the organization's March conference in California. "I was not elected and George was," Laura has said, "I would never want to undermine him in any way.... [Being the first lady] gives me the opportunity to further his policy initiatives on education, which I'm going to do. As first lady, one of my roles is to support his policies." Even, apparently, when those policies run counter to her own feelings.

And yet neither she nor her husband has suffered from these contradictions. A poll released last week by the Pew Research Center shows Laura with a 64 percent favorability rating. Although Hillary Clinton enjoyed a 60 percent favorability rating at the same point in her tenure, she was, according to Pew, a "far more divisive figure." Listening (and not listening) to Laura at Georgetown last week, it was pretty obvious why. Hillary forced the issue, fighting against the limitations and contradictions of her role, trying to carve out a public identity true to her private self—through her struggles, implicitly asking us to make up our minds about a woman's proper role in society. Laura Bush, by contrast, does not try to answer that question. She does not even acknowledge it. Which, deep down, may be exactly what we want. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Second Thoughts

VERY NEAR THE end of the lengthy closing credits for **Apocalypse Now Redux** (Miramax) comes the line: "Portions of this film were released in 1979 under the title *Apocalypse Now*." If the first version was incomplete, the word "redux" ("brought back," "returned") doesn't apply. And the word "portion" doesn't nearly reflect the sizes of the two versions: Version Two is one hundred ninety-six minutes long, but Version One was one hundred fifty minutes, hardly a mere "portion" of what is now released. Still, if this statement really is the view of the director, Francis Ford Coppola, why did he snuggle it away so coyly?

Let's compare. First, for those who have forgotten or who never saw the first version, a look at the central and unchanged story. In Vietnam in 1968, an army intelligence captain named Willard is ordered to make his way upriver to the station of a colonel named Kurtz who has apparently become imperially insane, madly dangerous. Willard's job is to "terminate" him. A river patrol boat and crew are put at Willard's disposal. Journeying through hazards and strange encounters, he finds Kurtz ensconced in jungle majesty in the ruins of a temple, attended by hundreds of native helots. After some time and some gnomic conversation between the two men, Willard completes his mission and starts home.

The screenplay by John Milius and Coppola is overtly modeled on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Willard's expedition is in essence a journey into the heart of a war in which (to quote my review in 1979) the troops were "tormented by fear and pointlessness into rank barbarities and new pits of racism.... Their suffering was often transmuted into gross slaughter, into drugging, into hysterical hilarity set to music." It was "a wild psychedelic war ... a jungle discotheque with butchery." At the end of this journey Willard finds the war's epitome.

One immediate difference from Conrad, other than the obvious ones of time and place, is that his protagonist, Marlow, encounters African mysteries for the first time as he travels, but Willard is a weathered veteran of this war. In fact, the opening sequence shows him boozing it up in his hotel room, apparently recovering from a jungle experience. This difference from Marlow lessens the reactive power of Willard and makes him even more passive, more of an observer, than he was bound to be anyway through most of the film.

When he starts, he first meets a battle-hungry colonel whose helicopters devastate a Vietnamese village for Willard. This is to enable a helicopter to put a patrol boat safely in position for his journey. En route Willard and crew meet firefights; they stop at a depot upcountry that is like a shopping mall misplaced; they see a performance by visiting Playboy bunnies at a base in the jungle for hundreds of troops—a performance that ends in an attempt at mass rape. At last, after deaths aboard the boat, Willard sails into Kurtz's domain amid hundreds of natives watching carefully, and the story moves to its conclusion.

The chief restorations are two sequences that were deleted in 1979 for reasons of narrative pace, so clearly Coppola's view of that pace has altered. Both sequences take place along the river. First, after the Playboy episode, the patrol boat encounters the Playboy helicopter downed upriver for lack of fuel. A deal is made with the Playboy manager, and in exchange for some of the boat's fuel, members of the crew are allowed to visit the bunnies in their helicopter. The sequence is entirely gratuitous: it seems to have been contrived, and not very deftly, to get some sex into the picture. (Willard does not participate.)

The second big restoration is at least more germane. The boat reaches a French-owned plantation, with a luxurious house, a small private army, and a large French family in residence. (Possibly such anomalies existed—French plantations safe even though the Vietminh had hated the French long before the Americans came.) The sequence has a double purpose. First, during the conversation at the dinner table at which Willard is a guest with the family, the French patriarch expounds the French claim that they had been here for more than a century and that in their own Vietnam war they had at least been fighting for what they believed was theirs. The Americans are fighting for nothing, he says scornfully. Then, later, the patriarch's widowed daughter-in-law visits Willard's bedroom.

This long sequence is a doubtful blessing. The patriarch's speech is a blatant insert. Possibly it would have had some impact twenty years ago, before the Vietnam war was so thoroughly exposed as an American governmental deception and blunder. Even then it would have seemed mechanical, but now it is also superfluous. The chief interest in the scene is purely cinematic, a Coppola touch. The family has seated Willard on the eastern side of the dinner table so that, through all the speechifying, he is bothered by the setting sun and has to shade his eyes. He has been put, so to speak, on the solar spot. As for the bedroom scene, it serves only to give Willard some sex without Playboy grossness.

About these restorations Coppola has misjudged. *Apocalypse Now* is one of the few instances where inclusion of outtakes has not helped. (Another was *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.) His film was better off as it was. Still, its re-issue, even as expanded, gives us the chance to confirm that it is, though ruptured, a major work. The very concept of the film is large-scale and daring, immediately absorbing. The sheer ozone of the enterprise clearly exalted Coppola throughout. He himself has used the term "operatic" about the picture—he confirms it with the use of "The Ride of the Valkyries" during the helicopter raid—and it has the breadth and artistic embrace and floridity that the word "opera" suggests.

Details of the difficulties during the two years of shooting are by now well lodged in articles and books. (There was even an Off-Broadway play about the travails of making this film: all names were changed, of course.) Still, despite the recurrent obstacles, the picture glows with Coppola's eagerness and talent. The journey upriver unrolls before us, synesthetically speaking, like a visible tone poem.

But the film falls short of what it might have been. Its troubles begin with the casting, particularly of Willard. The list of actors (now published) who turned down the role is saddening: Jack Nicholson, who was one of them, would by his very presence have enriched the picture. Martin Sheen, who got the role, was a

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much-delayed choice. Coppola actually started shooting with Harvey Keitel as Willard but, after a few weeks, was dissatisfied and replaced him. Sheen, the supposed improvement, is pallid and flat. Since Willard is only an observer through most of the story, the role needs innate force to keep it from being torpid. Sheen is limp. For the redux version I wish they could have inserted a new leading man instead of restoring the deleted sequences.

Marlon Brando, who is Kurtz, seems to have put Coppola in a bind. The director got the powerful actor he wanted and then was stuck with him. Even if all the offscreen stories had not been published, it would be easy to see that Brando is teasing the director, providing a minimum of energy. We're told that Brando (overweight but only about half his current size) insisted on improvising some of his dialogue; this malfeasance was, apparently, another egotistical stunt that Coppola simply had to endure. Caught between an inadequate leading man and a capricious capital figure, the picture has to depend almost desperately on the rest of the actors, who are helpful, and on Vittorio Storaro's camera, which is prodigal with several kinds of beauty.

The screenplay suffers from its reliance on Conrad because it does not rely on him heavily enough. Milius and Coppola took an armature from Conrad, the journey into the interior to find the heart of darkness, but what they produced was a tour of a terrible war with a spurious finish. The war sequences rank with those in *The Deer Hunter* and *Platoon* in their bitter fierceness, and nothing that scarifies the Vietnam debacle can be unworthy; but Conrad was grappling with immensity, not specifics. Several times in this film people say that human beings contain both good and evil, but this is mild stuff compared with what Conrad implies by "the horror."

At the end, after killing Kurtz, Willard departs, making his way through a host of natives who let him pass. (Apparently the meekness of these men who had been devoted to Kurtz is based on the thesis in *The Golden Bough* that, in the eyes of the worshippers, he who kills the god becomes the god.) Slowly, as the riverboat departs, the screen goes to black, and we hear Kurtz repeating, "The horror. The horror." But the true horror in this film is not what Kurtz mouths in imitation of Conrad: it is the war itself. ■

Jed Perl on Art
Sex and Politics

PICASSO WAS ALWAYS keenly aware that the public for art contains many publics. He was revered by the small, adventuresome audience that was looking for the most refined and even arcane experiences that the modern spirit had to offer. But he also bonded with a wider audience that expected the artist to be a genius-demiurge, a figure on the order of Victor Hugo or Auguste Rodin, compelling as much for who he was as for what he did, using an unparalleled virtuosity to give contemporary life a mythic impact. More than any other artist, Picasso knew how to establish a whole range of distinctive and sometimes even contradictory relationships with gallery-goers and museumgoers and people who might have just heard about his work in the most casual way. He could produce work that was austerely enigmatic one year, disquietingly provocative the next year, and frankly emotional the year after that. To consider the delicately expressionist Rose Period acrobats, the grandly mysterious traceries of *Ma Jolie*, the theatricalized violence of *Guernica*, and the sublime dirty-old-man sexual shenanigans of *Suite 347* is to see that Picasso's need to express different aspects of his own temperament became a way of relating to the world in a near infinity of different ways.

This man who struck some of his early friends and lovers as more interested in being famous than in being an artist knew better than anyone that fame is a compact or a bond between a person and a public, and he worked tirelessly, inside the studio and beyond the studio, to make sure that he had the world's attention. No wonder, then, that what Picasso did—as abstractionist, lyricist, mythologist, fantasist, memorialist, lover, clown, and provocateur—has shaped so many of our expectations about what art can do. Even now, one hundred years after his first show at Ambroise Vollard's gallery in Paris and a generation after his death in 1973 at the age of ninety-one, his name remains almost synonymous with the idea of the artist. Yet there is a danger in Picasso's very ubiquity, for an artist who was so attuned to the public can become beholden to the public, as if he were in some way waiting for *it* to decide who he really is. Picasso's reputation has a way of seeming as multi-faceted, as unpredictable, as unstable, as the audience's tastes. And this in turn goes some way toward explaining why the question of who Picasso really was has remained so tangled, such an enigma.

The two major Picasso exhibitions appearing in North American museums this summer are not without their revelations. And yet as I went through **Picasso Érotique** at the **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts** and **Picasso: The Artist's Studio** at the **Wadsworth Atheneum** in Hartford, I felt that, more often than not, these studies of Picasso as sexual provocateur and as proverbial creator were bumping up against old verities and leaving old mysteries in place. Picasso was squeezing me in familiar ways; he was working his magic, but it was more or less as he had done in the past. As for the most interesting of the new crop of books, *Picasso: The Communist Years* by Gertje R. Utley (Yale University Press), Utley relates with unblinking clarity the story of Picasso's close association with the French Communist Party in the decade after World War II and then refuses to come up with some pat, comfortable answer to the question that is on the reader's mind. How on earth, we ask ourselves, could a man who was so totally committed to the freedom of the imagination throw in his lot with a party that was mired in Stalinist apologetics? There seems to be no end to what one can learn about Picasso, but the very facts that we might expect to close the gap between him and us sometimes have a way of underscoring the distance at which he kept himself.

SURELY NOBODY NEEDS to wonder why "Picasso Érotique," an exhibition of some three hundred fifty works, is getting so much attention. Sex sells, in museums as everywhere else. And this exhibition promises to expose a secret Picasso—and thus further to complicate the artist's relationship with the public. The truth, however, is that "Picasso

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Érotique" (which has already been seen in Paris and goes to the Museu Picasso in Barcelona in the fall) presents material that is quite familiar in its general outlines and even in many of its particulars. We already knew that Picasso produced by far the largest group of erotically charged drawings, paintings, prints, and sculptures of any major artist in history, but then Picasso was never one for doing things by half. At the beginning of the show he records his early sexual experiences, many of them in the brothels of Barcelona. Toward the close of the exhibition, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he is producing hundreds of etchings in which he renders wild-eyed lasciviousness with an iron-willed graphic lucidity that is like nothing else in art. Some of what fills the rest of "Picasso Érotique," however, relates to the theme in a broader, sometimes more theoretical sense: there are nudes in suggestive poses, there are homages to the loves of his life, there are abstractions in which the shapes are anything but abstract.

"Picasso Érotique" is packed with humdingers. The mood can go from heartfelt passion to locker-room humor in the blink of an eye. Sometimes, as in a series of drawings called *An Anatomy: Three Women* (1933), which features figures constructed of geometrized penises and vaginas, you have what might be called intellectualized locker-room humor. The viewer's mind is kept spinning all through the show, and that's just fine. For an artist who was as aware of his audience as Picasso, eroticism had to have a multifaceted fascination, since it sits right in the center of so many debates about the relative values of public and private experience. Picasso, who came of age amid the sexual thaw of the fin-de-siècle, would have been especially aware of these issues. In his work he makes brilliant, razor-sharp distinctions between lasciviousness and eroticism, between a frankness that many would call pornographic and a veiled approach that may at times be jokey, at other times emotionally enigmatic. There are drawings—of Dora Maar, especially—in which I felt that he was remembering something very precise, a particular time that they experienced together in bed. In other works—the large bronzes done in the early 1930s, in which phallic forms are knit together with the classical profile of his young lover Marie-Thérèse Walter to create heads—Picasso is dealing not so much in specifics as in signs and symbols and a spirit of grand generalization. Sometimes Picasso portrays what he is doing, sometimes what he fantasizes about doing, sometimes what he thinks others are doing.

Picasso cannot fail to keep a museumgoer engaged, often thrillingly so, but the particular gathering of works in "Picasso Érotique" strikes me as being at war with the artist whom it is meant to illuminate. By bringing together anything that has to do with sex, from the rosy-colored, gently nostalgic early portraits of Fernande Olivier to actual pin-up photographs on which Picasso scrawled some casual sketches in the 1950s, the show aims to present Picasso as a dog who is always sniffing around some lady. The directors of the three museums that organized the show—Guy Cogeval in Montreal, Jean Clair in Paris, and Maria Teresa Ocaña in Barcelona—open the catalog with a very blunt pronouncement: "Picasso's oeuvre —and this is a given—is purely, entirely erotic. His was a genius in which the creative gesture was fused with the sexual impulse." We know that on several occasions Picasso said that "Art is never chaste." But that is a very different kind of statement—a mocking dig at stuffy connoisseurs.

THE CLEAR INTENT of the organizers of "Picasso Érotique" is to demonstrate that Picasso was always in heat, and that it was his overstimulated libido that made him such a supreme artist. But the work on display in Montreal keeps turning this idea on its head. What you see at "Picasso Érotique" is eroticism as an enormously complex equation that Picasso is constantly reshaping in the most conscious, purposeful, lucid ways. The organizers would not exactly deny this; they are too smart for that. Still, it would be fair to say that they are less interested in showing that Picasso had ideas about his feelings than they are in pummeling us with a century's worth of sexual heat. And this dumbs down Picasso. If anything, he had a habit of over-intellectualizing his emotions—he mythologized them and hyperbolized them and abstracted them in ways that can at times muffle his effects.

"Picasso Érotique" aims to psychoanalyze the artist, but I think it would be closer to the truth to say that the show sensationalizes him. That may seem farfetched, considering how inherently provocative so much of this material is—but in Montreal the curators are not content to let Picasso be Picasso. They are using Picasso to prove that they are hipper than thou, that they know how to strut their transgressive stuff. "Picasso Érotique" was originally organized by Jean Clair, director of the Musée Picasso, and I am told that the installation at the Jeu de Paume, where the show was mounted in Paris, was quite straightforward. In Montreal, however, where the guest curator is Jean-Jacques Lebel, an avant-garde writer and artist who wants it to be known that he organized happenings in the 1960s, Picasso's libido is not deemed sufficient. Before visitors are able to see even a single Picasso, Lebel confronts them with a space that he has done up as a bedroom in a fin-de-siècle Barcelona bordello, with a big bed, deep red walls, pornographic pictures on the walls, and a video presentation of old nudie flicks. Picasso is not dirty enough for Lebel. The artist is not going to be allowed to tell his own story, at least not without the curator's underlining things in bordello red. Later on, to keep up the pressure, Lebel introduces little peepholes through which museumgoers can view Courbet's dirtiest picture, *The Origin of the World*, and Duchamp's rehash of Courbet in *Étant donnés*.

In Montreal, a city that we are told is immune to the kinds of controversies about the funding of sexually charged imagery that have been the talk of American museums in recent years, the show is presented as a swaggering demonstration of liberated derring-do. The catalog cover, in red of course, is amusing, with a rectangular cutout through which we see a rather tame etching of a pubic triangle. But when the curators announce in the preface that "at the close of the century, all signs point to the return of a moralist order on the Western shores of the Atlantic (where, already, Picasso's erotic works are no longer shown)," we may begin to suspect that Picasso is being used to make their points, not his own. Picasso, in any event, was no stranger to censorship. He complained bitterly when the Louise Leiris Gallery was unable to reproduce some of the most sexually explicit plates in *Suite 347* in a catalog that the gallery was preparing for a show of this work. That, of course, did not prevent those plates from finding their way into the world, including the United States.

AT "PICASSO ÉROTIQUE," the curators keep turning enveloping visions into sexual obsessions. By claiming that sex is the essential force in Picasso's art, they end up isolating sex, and maybe even making it seem less important than it really is. In the show's first gallery, a dazzlingly frank canvas of a boyish Picasso being serviced by a woman whose long black hair falls luxuriantly over his thighs is followed by provocative drawings of men and women in the act, and of women preparing for or awaiting or remembering those acts. The mood ranges from ribald and cartoonish to tenderhearted and romantic. And there are some odd little symbolic

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sketches, with gigantic phallic and vaginal forms that offer a slightly sardonic take on the sexual mysticism of the years when symbolism reigned supreme.

Picasso's work here is easygoing, diaristic, autobiographical, but there is something a bit artificial about isolating these sexually charged scenes from the much broader story of the artist as a young man that Picasso relates in all his paintings and drawings in the years right after 1900. I wish that the works in the first room of "Picasso Érotique" were joined with the works that were in the extraordinary first rooms of the exhibition "Picasso: The Early Years, 1892–1906," in Washington and Boston in 1997. The picaresque spirit of the early Picasso carries straight through from these erotic images to pictures of him and his friends hanging out in cafés, of the vampish women at dance halls, of the desolate rooms that were his first homes. In Picasso's art, you often can't tell where eroticism ends and other matters begin. But "Picasso Érotique" wants to draw those lines.

There is no way that any exhibition devoted to Picasso's erotic dreams and sexual experiences could not have its giddy high points, and at "Picasso Érotique" museumgoers are taken all the way up. There is an extraordinary union of erotic fever and romantic longing in the large drawing in colored pencil *Dora and the Minotaur* (1936), which is now in the Musée Picasso but was little known or even unknown until after Dora Maar's death in 1997, as it had been part of the private collection of the notoriously reclusive woman. In this broad, horizontal composition the minotaur is a dark predator. But a mixture of meekness and awe is evident in his demeanor as he presses down on Dora, who, with her cool white flesh, kicked-up legs, and flung-back head, is a startlingly immediate, almost anti-mythological presence. This is one of those drawings that Picasso lingered over, lavishing more attention on their elaborately worked-up surfaces than he did on many an oil painting. (The drawing is on more than one piece of paper, so that we can see Picasso expanding his ideas as he went along.) The color of the landscape is amazing, a sulphurous rainbow that underscores the image's hallucinogenic quality. Even as he exults in the present, Picasso is looking back. There is something in the full articulation of the forms that recalls the Neoclassicism of the 1920s, while the ripe color and curves echo the paintings of Marie-Thérèse done four years earlier. Picasso, who plays the minotaur, is a myth contemplating a reality, an omnivorous artist who is himself completely consumed, at least for the moment, by the particularity of Dora Maar.

Dora and the Minotaur is, I think, a central work of the late 1930s, and I was grateful for the opportunity to see it; but by the time I found myself in front of this drawing at the midpoint of "Picasso Érotique," I felt that the show had long ago turned into a conceptual shambles. One of the big problems is that the curators seem to believe that in order to delineate Picasso's eroticism they have to downplay the biographical dimension in his work. The exhibition tends to reduce sex to hydraulics. Now Picasso, in some of his hilarious drawings of abstracted erotic figures on beaches, gave us the canniest images of sexual hydraulics in all art, and the abstractness of those images has a wonderful way of suggesting the destabilizing physicality of sex. But Olga and Marie-Thérèse and Dora and Jacqueline were not just sex machines for Picasso. They were also people with faces, moods, tempers, sometimes even professional and intellectual interests. (Picasso was involved with some very intellectual women, especially Dora Maar.)

COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Picasso, "Portrait of the Artist Making Love," 1903

Picasso's visual salutes to these women in his life play with the totality of their characters and temperaments—and extend them. The Dora Maar who kicks up her legs, who is soft and whimsical and passionate, is also the Dora Maar who weeps, who vamps. The show cannot help but suggest that Picasso was aware of the personalities of the women with whom he was involved, yet essentially the curators want to turn anybody Picasso slept with into another symptom of his one big sex obsession. (The catalog, it should be said, contains a number of essays that go off in different directions and highlight the particulars of his various erotic involvements.) For Picasso, sex was a big part of life, but then with this man everything was on a big scale, and working in his studio and looking at art and knowing all kinds of people were surely as important as his love affairs and his marriages.

"Picasso Érotique" fails to produce a coherent view of Picasso's life, and as a view of his most revolutionary artistic exploits it is utterly incoherent. If, as the organizers would have us believe, Picasso's work is "purely, entirely erotic," how is it that an entire decade, 1910–1920, the decade when Picasso and Braque were creating Cubism, is almost entirely excluded from the show? To situate Cubism within Picasso's erotic imagination may indeed be a challenge, but it is one that the curators, who jump from the period of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* more or less straight to Surrealism, refuse to confront. (It is worth noting that some of Picasso's most famous comments on the relationship between art and eroticism date from the late 1950s and 1960s, some fifty years after the Cubist revolution.)

I am left wondering whether one could indeed argue that Cubism, by pulling the naturalistic clothing off painting, exposed some secret—maybe erotic—life in art. Is Cubism painting *en déshabillé*? With Cubism the plane of the canvas, heretofore a scene of complex reconstructions of naturalistic space—of the public world—became itself a translucent architecture with its own disorderly order, its secret places, its dramatic penetrations. This may sound rather airy and far-fetched. Perhaps it is. But at "Picasso Érotique" neither this argument nor any other is made on behalf of Cubism. While

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Picasso is shown playing with human anatomy in a hundred different ways, the essential play that is Cubism is absent. And without the violation of naturalistic illusionism that is Cubism, much of the erotic violence in the later galleries makes little sense.

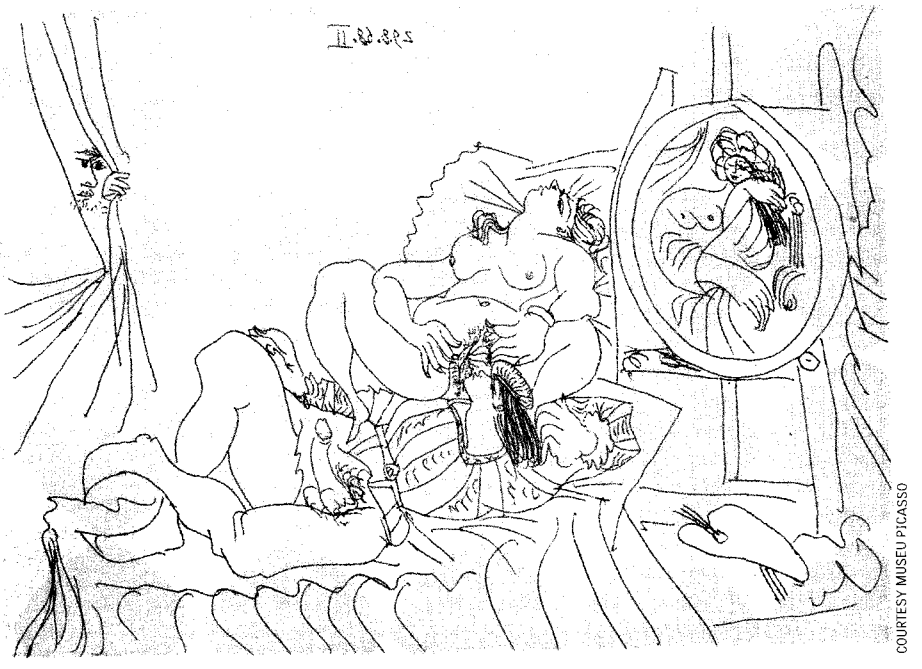
EVEN IF THE curators had found a way to place Cubism more squarely in the center of "Picasso Érotique," there is no way to avoid one's suspicion that in the end any master theme will fail to account for the range of Picasso's achievement. To look at the two huge suites of etchings that preoccupied him in the late 1960s and early 1970s—*Suite 347* and *156*—is to find Picasso delighting in an often deliriously complicated narrative mode, offering a vast set of tales both picaresque and darker in tone, and constructing his images in a way that has nothing much at all to do with Cubism. These prints, generally etched but also employing a wide range of other intaglio techniques, contain much of Picasso's most unabashedly erotic work. They might be Picasso's way of saying, "Come up and see my etchings." And he says it with a witty, theatrical slant. The eroticism is dazzlingly fresh and immediate, but it is also stylized, set in a historical and even an art-historical house of mirrors, with Raphael and Degas and Michelangelo making guest appearances.

The prints in *Suite 347* and *156* are often veritable crowd scenes, a kind of last grand gathering of Picasso's people: the beautiful women, the artists as avid young men and wizened old men, the children, the gaggle of performers and hangers-on and older ladies and gents who have appeared in his work so many times before. Picasso introduces some fascinating self-portraits in which he is shriveled, monkey-like. In one print Picasso is a photographer, his head poked into an old-fashioned camera as he snaps the portrait of a bunch of gorgeous babes. Taken together, *Suite 347* and *156* are Picasso's last and fullest expression of the face-off between the artist and the audience. And sex, that private matter that has so many public faces, is quite naturally everywhere.

In the catalog of "Picasso: The Last Years, 1963–1973," one of the early presentations of this work in New York, at the Guggenheim in 1984, Gert Schiff observed that while *Suite 347* (1968) was about innocence, *156* (1972) was about experience. Certainly this is true of the essential erotic episodes: if what is most remembered from *Suite 347* is the series of prints of Raphael, a gloriously well-endowed young blade, in *156* it is the old Degas who holds our attention, a man on the sidelines in a brothel, looking on as the women with their huge eyes and vast thighs and long painted fingernails make a spectacle of themselves. The Raphael cycle is Picasso's final consideration of the artist as a young stud. In the Degas cycle the artist is a crotchety voyeur.

Ingres, whose immaculate formalizations of erotic heat always fascinated Picasso (and who once painted a canvas that focused on his young wife Madeleine's belly and thighs) is another presence in these late prints. Picasso regarded Ingres's paintings of Raphael and La Fornarina, in which the two are the adorably cuddly, almost high-camp perfect couple, as the jumping-off point for his own bedroom romps. And the memory of Ingres is also somewhere in the Degas plates of *156*, considering that Ingres was revered by Degas, who stares at Picasso's prostitutes as if they were the wonder women in Ingres's *Turkish Bath*. Picasso, who collected Degas's monoprints of brothel scenes and used them as a basis for his own work in *156*, could well have regarded his collection of Degas's prints as mirroring the homage that Degas paid to Ingres by collecting the great academician's work.

Sex has never been shown with more frank visual elegance than in Picasso's etchings of Raphael and La Fornarina. The tradition of pornographic prints actually creates a link back to Raphael, for his student Giuliano Romano did a famous cycle, called *I Modi*, of sixteen forms of sexual intercourse. Still, dazzlingly virtuosic as those works are, they are no match for the lucidity, the wildness, the sheer laugh-out-loud fun of Picasso's prints. Raphael, it is worth remembering, epitomized the idealized naturalistic vision of High Renaissance art, a vision with which Picasso was at loggerheads. And yet Picasso might have felt an identification with this Renaissance boy art hero who was so attractive to women. For Picasso, the fact that Raphael died young (at thirty-seven, less than half Picasso's age when he was working on *Suite 347*) could have provided him with a splendid emblem for his own lost youth. Picasso's curvilinear line, sleek and quicksilver, gives Raphael's great instrument and his lover's wide-open vagina a bewitching comic-heroic eloquence. The scenes are hilarious, gossipy Renaissance escapades, scampishly gorgeous and elating; and it only adds to the fun when Raphael wields a paintbrush as well as a penis, or when Pope Julius II is taking a peek at the couple, or when Michelangelo, who wrote sonnets about the spirituality of love, is discovered hiding under their bed.



COURTESY MUSEU PICASSO

Picasso, "Raphael and La Fornarina II: With a Hidden Voyeur," 1968

To turn from Raphael in the bedroom to Degas in the brothel is to find everything slowing down. The space in these prints is shallow, packed tight with the extravagant, Fellini-esque forms of gorgeous whores, often gathered around their scarily wrinkled and crinkled madam. The etched line is razor sharp but also almost rubbery. Picasso will create an entire figure with a very few lines. And then in one or another place he will zero in on a luxuriant vagina, or on some knife-sharp fingernails, or on a bunch of uproariously complex eyelashes. And there, off to the side, is the mean, sad-

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sack Degas—the watcher, a nothing-much profile. In these prints Picasso presents his women with a caricaturist's stylized verve that is like a sublime version of Saul Steinberg's cartooning. Steinberg's work was known in France in the late 1960s, and I would not be surprised if Picasso wanted to push Steinberg's graphic wit further, into a tragicomic impetuousness, an old bacchant's last yelp.

There is more at "Picasso Érotique" after *156*, but I think it can be said that it is in *Suite 347* and *156* that the show's theme is most clearly resolved. If the story of "Picasso Érotique," such as it is, begins in the sexual opening-up of the fin-de-siècle, I do not think it is entirely mistaken to believe that it ends in the sexual revolution of the 1960s. By then Picasso was living a relatively isolated existence in the south of France, but one gathers that he kept abreast of events in the wide world, and I think that even as he was delighting in turning out erotica for the very rich, he was asserting that he understood what was happening among the very young. Indeed, a case can be made that *Suite 347* and *156* are the only lasting visual art to come out of the sexual revolution. Is there anything else that's even worth putting in contention?

WHAT HAS BEEN SO surprising in the nearly thirty years since Picasso's death is how his achievement, which we always knew was vast, has kept on growing. From the retrospective that filled the whole of the Museum of Modern Art in 1980 through the opening of the Musée Picasso in 1985 and the exhibition of the sketchbooks at the Pace Gallery in New York in 1986 to shows of the early work, of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, of Cubism, of the late paintings, of photography and sculpture and ceramics, the revelations have been almost overwhelming. The written record is also extraordinary, including numerous catalogs, the first two volumes of John Richardson's biography, and James Lord's immaculate and penetrating memoir *Picasso and Dora*.

For an artist to be producing revelations a generation after his death is remarkable, but as I have gone through the shows this summer I have begun to suspect that we are at last coming to the end of a great cycle with Picasso. At "Picasso Érotique" and "Picasso: The Artist's Studio" in Hartford I kept getting flashes of other shows in which certain works looked better or made more sense. "Picasso Érotique" ends with some drawings from 1972 of women whose broken-down bodies look like chairs with the stuffing coming out; they made a striking pianissimo close to "Le dernier Picasso" at the Pompidou Center in 1988, but they feel like an afterthought in Montreal. Neither in Montreal nor in Hartford was the selection of late paintings as compelling as it had been at Pompidou in 1988 or at the Pace Gallery in New York in 1981. As for the picture of Picasso's beginnings that we are offered in Montreal and in Hartford, at both shows I could not help thinking back to the more balanced presentation at "Picasso: The Early Years" in 1997.

Yet the flood of Picasso books and exhibitions shows no signs of slowing. In the museum world, Picasso appears to be the only twentieth-century artist who is as sure to bring in a crowd as Monet or Van Gogh. Publishers may feel the same way, and good work is certainly appearing. *Loving Picasso: The Private Journal of Fernande Olivier* (Abrams), the woman who was at Picasso's side from 1905 to 1912, has just been published in an English translation; Fernande comes across as a figure out of the early Colette, hungry for experience, wiser than the world will allow her to be. *Myth and Metamorphosis: Picasso's Classical Prints of the 1930s*, by Lisa Florman (MIT), is a close-grained study of Picasso's feeling for a literary text, and gives us a deft sense of what Picasso made of Ovid. Picasso's vast output is an almost bottomless source, and it looks far larger today than it did when he died, in large measure because of our still-growing familiarity with the huge trove of work that he had kept for himself and that is now available in the seemingly bottomless storerooms of the Musée Picasso.

Going through "Picasso Érotique," where much of the material comes from the Musée Picasso and some of the material seems rather slight, I began to wonder whether Picasso's habit of keeping every last scrap of paper was entirely a good thing. I am reminded of Meyer Schapiro's warning to students that it is best to begin by studying an area in which there is not a surfeit of sources: you learn to judge things better. Picasso left so much that his own archives can seem to confirm any view of the man. The archives of the Musée Picasso—which must hold every receipt or postcard that Picasso ever received—may give us the illusion of total comprehension, but still it seems that Picasso is no more transparent, no more understandable, than he ever was.

AND THERE ARE sides of Picasso that everybody would just as soon forget. I suspect that Gertje R. Utley's *Picasso: The Communist Years*, which certainly contains its share of references to the archives of the Musée Picasso, has been received somewhat equivocally because it presents such a deeply unattractive picture of Picasso—a portrait of the artist as a hopelessly, pointlessly compromised man. Picasso joined the Communist Party in October 1944, only weeks after the liberation of Paris, and he remained a member in good standing for the rest of his life. Communism attracted large numbers of artists and intellectuals in Europe after the war, and although their conduct and their culpability has been evaluated in any number of ways by their contemporaries and by later historians, few would by now be inclined to claim that this is anything but a very ugly story in which nobody comes out well. The nature of the Soviet regime was already quite evident: as long ago as the 1930s André Gide had lost friends by saying so. And by the early 1950s it was impossible not to know something about Stalin's gulags, about the purges, about the executions, about what the Soviets were doing in Eastern Europe. James Lord, who knew Picasso in those years and was involved in trying to get him to protest the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, reviewed Utley's book in the *Times Literary Supplement* and took her to task for not making a bolder moral case against Picasso. I think that Utley's cool, matter-of-fact telling of the tale does make the case; her book has a quietly devastating effect.

One of the explanations that used to be given for Picasso's involvement with the Communists, at least immediately after the war, was that he needed their protection, as he was afraid that he would be attacked as a collaborator who had played host to German officers during the war. Utley's early pages, which reflect research that has been taking place in France in recent years, suggest that Picasso, who during the Occupation gave secret support to a number of underground publications and to Republican Spanish causes, was always regarded with considerable suspicion by the Germans. Picasso thus begins to look like a somewhat more admirable figure in the early 1940s—but this only makes his embrace of the Communists less explicable. What troubles is not so much Picasso's initial interest in the party, but his willingness over a period of years to allow himself to do the bidding of party officials who, he knew perfectly well, abhorred modern art and were interested in him simply because he was such a good catch. For a time Picasso went to conferences and made public appearances, although his dislike of travel and public speaking kept him away from many events. The portrait that he drew of a youthful, somewhat goofy-looking Stalin at the time of the leader's death in 1953 was badly received by the party; but even if Picasso meant to undercut the

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solemnity of the event, this does not clear him of having done the drawing in the first place. Time and again, when intellectuals within the party who were looking for a liberalization of attitudes toward the arts turned to Picasso, he simply would not help. In 1948 a group of writers from the paper *Action* attempted to interest Picasso and his friend the poet Paul Éluard in signing a letter requesting more freedom of expression; Picasso, like his friend, refused. Even in 1956, when Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Picasso's close friend Michel Leiris denounced Soviet aggression in Hungary, Picasso chose to remain silent.

Utley could have said even more than she does about the extent to which the years of Picasso's deepest involvement with the party, the late 1940s and early 1950s, were a period when his art seemed to be unraveling. I can think of many reasons why there was so much slippage in his work. The move to the south of France denied him the stimulation of Paris, which had nourished him for half a century. He was in a relationship with Françoise Gilot that was probably among the least satisfying of his life. And he was confronting the inescapable arrival of old age. Picasso did discover some new directions in those years. His ceramics are amusing (and sometimes more than that), and his sculpture took on renewed force. But the strain in his paintings, which are characterized by an increasingly uneasy embrace of naturalistic effects, may reflect a desire to accommodate the stolid, meat-and-potatoes Socialist Realist sensibility of the French Communist Party.

One cannot make a blanket statement about the work Picasso produced in the decade after the end of World War II. The *Peace* mural that covers one wall of the Temple of Peace in Vallauris, painted in 1952, with its dancing figures and baby acrobat and goofy Pegasus, is an exhilarating piece of work; but the *War* panel is cartoonish and unconvincing. As for *Massacre in Korea*, done in 1951 in response to Soviet claims of American aggression in Korea, it has to be one of the weakest, most artificially stylized works of Picasso's career. Coming out of the studio of the man who had produced *Guernica*, *Massacre in Korea* suggests a mortifying loss of power. This is a party hack's idea of how Cubism might be bent to party discipline. The thought of Picasso doing the bidding of the party that had long ago in Russia destroyed the very artists who had embraced his ideas is almost too bizarre to contemplate.

Picasso's communism does not strike me as organically related to the artist's essential viewpoint, like Eliot's conservatism or Pound's fascism. In Picasso's postwar politics we seem to confront a blank wall. What are we to make of the photograph of Picasso in Rome in 1949 giving a close, friendly look to a big photograph of Stalin? Could this artist who came of age as Nietzsche was the talk of the Barcelona cafés have seen in Stalin an interesting sort of superman? Was Picasso simply following the intellectual fashion that had filled the pages of *Les Temps Modernes* and so many other journals with elegantly obtuse meditations on tyrannical regimes? Or would we be wisest to agree with those who argue that Picasso had been unraveling as a man and as an artist since the 1920s or 1930s, and dismiss his Stalinist and Soviet sympathies as the meanderings of a mind past its prime?

I do think that in recent years there has been more wringing of hands over the public conduct of artists than there needs to be. That immensely gifted artists can be ugly or venal people may pose an unresolvable conflict only for those who refuse to believe that art is a world with its own laws and logic. Still, Picasso does provoke these questions. Nobody made him cast that affectionate glance at a photograph of Stalin. And, for that matter, nobody but Picasso let David Douglas Duncan into the bathroom where he could photograph the master apparently naked in the tub, which gets one's mind going back in the direction of "Picasso Érotique."

IT IS PROBABLY in the nature of great artists that no matter how deep we go into their work we are always left with some unresolvable core. Picasso is that kind of enigma, but his art also has a way of presenting multiple enigmas. And the way he kept so many sides of his life in public view does not simplify matters one bit. Picasso beckons you to come closer, but he also takes you for a ride—for any number of rides. The wide public may instinctively love Picasso for his variety, even for his grandstanding, and Picasso might have said that this was understanding enough.

In a statement that he made in 1923, Picasso rejected the idea of evolution or progress in his art. He presented himself as a kind of creative pragmatist. "Whenever I had something to say," he explained, "I have said it in the manner in which I felt it ought to be said. Different motives inevitably require different methods of expression. This does not imply either evolution or progress, but an adaptation of the idea one wants to express and the means to express that idea." I shuttle back and forth between art and experience, Picasso seems to say. Eroticism will require some kinds of treatments, political calamity will require others. There is no particular pattern.

Yet is there not some essential impulse, some single key to the personality of the man? Michael FitzGerald, the art historian who organized "Picasso: The Artist's Studio" in Hartford, must have hoped that by taking us into the place where the artist creates he could find a key that fit at least some of the doors of Picasso's imagination. (The show is in Hartford until September 23 and then goes to the Cleveland Museum of Art.) Yet for the most part the marvelous works in this exhibition are no more likely to give us the lowdown on Picasso's creativity than the plates in *Suite 347* are likely to give us the lowdown on his sexuality. Picasso has taken us into the artist's studio, sure enough, but what he tells us about the studio is a carefully crafted story, not a from-the-heart confession. The studio is treated allegorically, symbolically, mythologically. And the results are often splendid. But the subject here is not so much what the studio means to Picasso as what Picasso wants us to imagine that it means to him.

PRETTY MUCH FROM the beginning, "The Artist's Studio" shows Picasso putting a public face on the artistic process. Picasso offers a very clearly drawn confrontation between artist and model, or artist and work of art, in the magnificent paintings from the 1920s in which every element in the scene is subsumed in a geometricized armature, sometimes of angled straight lines, sometimes of curving topologies. A group of still lifes from the 1930s that contain palettes and brushes are variations on the kind of "Allegory of the Arts" that Chardin painted in the eighteenth century. Elsewhere Picasso salutes the studios of other artists—of Rembrandt and Velázquez. And in some late paintings he reprises the face-off of the studio paintings of the 1920s, only now in a manner more cartoonishly, ebulliently labyrinthine.

Only very occasionally does "The Artist's Studio" offer traces of a more veiled, complex, hidden kind of creativity, but they are certainly well worth examining. I was fascinated by two very early drawings for the mural for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair in 1937, the mural that eventually turned into *Guernica*. These modest pencil drawings, discovered only after Picasso's death, suggest that in his original thoughts, before the bombing of the town of Guernica, the vast mural was going to depict an artist's studio, and that even after events in Spain had radically transformed his ideas, some of the initial imagery—

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including the artist's outstretched arm and the grieving face of his model—was preserved, although its meaning was radically altered. We glimpse here a process by which the most private experience of the model in the studio could be linked with the most enormous public events. *La Vie*, a work from 1903 that is included in "The Artist's Studio," might on the face of it seem to have as little to do with the exhibition's theme as *Guernica*, but studies for *La Vie* make it clear that this essential Blue Period exploration of youth and age and love and death also began as a painting of an artist and his model or lover in the studio.

What is so interesting about the preparatory drawings for *Guernica* and *La Vie* is that they pose the studio not as a fixed allegorical confrontation between artist and model, but as a fluid point of reference, a fundamental experience that can be transformed into many different things. This idea of transformation as a guiding principle seems likely to lead us to the center of Picasso's art, if such a center does exist. Unlike "evolution" and "progress," those words that Picasso himself rejected, "transformation" does not imply one-way development. And this idea accords with Picasso's observation that "A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one's thoughts change."

"Transformation" is the magic word in Meyer Schapiro's essay "The Unity of Picasso's Art," an essay developed over many years, presented as a lecture in the late 1960s, and now published posthumously with two other essays as *The Unity of Picasso's Art* (Braziller). Schapiro's essay is an attempt to find a unity in the art of this man whose works, he explains, "if they were shown together in a big exhibition," would be rather difficult to identify as the achievement of a single person. Schapiro takes us through a number of the transformations that he sees in Picasso's career, but he eventually fastens on one of the studio paintings from the 1920s, though the *Painter and Model* that interests Schapiro is not one of the canvases that made the trip from the Museum of Modern Art in New York to Hartford this summer. Schapiro sees in this painting an almost treatise-like exposition of Picasso's view of the creative process. Looking at the interaction in this work between the artist and the model, who stand apart but are joined through the complexly geometrized spectacle of the artist's easel, Schapiro writes that "it is as if [Picasso] is saying that what you call reality, the evident physical beauty of things, is itself a product of our invention, construction, power of ideas, power of giving coherence, wholeness to something that in actual life is always changing, uncertain, and full of different aspects seen in various perspectives."

Schapiro believes that "there are two kinds of transformation" that occur in Picasso's art: "from the reality to an abstraction; from an abstraction into a reality." He goes on to argue that both kinds of transformations "are given to [Picasso]; he possesses them fully; he is able to explore them and produce a thousand different kinds of paintings through this discovery of the reversibility of transformational processes in art." This idea of the back-and-forth of creation, of a push-and-pull between abstraction and reality, explains a great deal in Picasso—

The Late Letters of Arthur Rimbaud

From the edge of a Cyprus quarry, from Harar,
sacred city guarded by roving packs of dogs,
from the midst of swarms, from fevers, he composed
the correspondence of a hellish motto:

We go where we do not want to go,
we do what we do not want to do—
then sent those letters home to recount
his misery and beg some relief, some scrap

of redemption: money, family news, or books,
The Pocket Book of Carpenters, engineering
dictionaries, leaflets and handbooks for candle-making
and tunneling, the word-material for schemes nothing

came from—no dwelling and no escape—save distraction.
Then, another journey, another mishap—weather and injury—
another letter and its crave: money, news, another book . . .
How unlike his early letters, those exquisite battle cries—

O mad ambition! A language must be found—
yelled on his rush to the glamorous and severe, those pitiless,
pure incantations, those manifestos like suicide notes
demanding others' lives—even their pleas were commands:

to his loves he cried, *Come back*, but leave your other loves behind . . .
In their frenzy the new language crackled and buzzed, hooked-up,
fully loaded, future-ready . . .
for any future except the one received,

stunning only in its petty demands, a bad venture
along cruel routes where death approached
without fame's long shadow, where all the meetings
were disappointments, all the excess waste,

where the toll was paid with platitudes of misery—
I have no idea what to do. I can't sleep. Why do we exist?
Send me news—scribbled on a small, hot desk, hunched-over,
then sent—dark and mute, in bundles, heaved upon

and strapped to the back of some slowly dying beast,
loaded on a creaking craft, launched on sharp,
sawing waves, passed through a hundred hands,
smudged and cut, faded to near-anonymous,

slipped silently into the dark mouth of a chute—
to speak its brief prayer, to say its sigh—
This is who I am, and this is what I need—
the perfect poem of a distant, human cry.

Michael Theune

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including, perhaps, the "Now you see me, now you don't" relationship that he has always had with the public. If Picasso did place such a value on transformation, this may even go some way toward explaining—without in any way exonerating—his belief that he could transform himself also into an artist in the service of the Soviet Union. No doubt Picasso imagined that he would be able to slip out of any situation he got himself into.

When William Rubin presented "Picasso and Portraiture," his own attempt to understand Picasso's creative processes, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1996, he began his catalog essay by acknowledging a debt to Schapiro; he even incorporated Schapiro's ideas in the very subtitle of the show, "Representation and Transformation." Rubin went beyond the traditional idea that Picasso's styles were keyed to the physiognomies of the women whom he loved and suggested a more complex and multileveled process, by which preexisting stylistic inclinations were answered by elements in a physiognomy, which in turn inspired further stylistic developments. By the logic of Rubin's—and Schapiro's—argument, an erotic experience could inspire a stylistic motif that might in turn be used to describe or to evoke an entirely different kind of subject or experience. This explains how a history painting could be imagined in formal terms derived from somewhere else—from, say, the experience of the model in the studio. It was through a ceaseless process of transformation that Picasso created the endless masks that are his paintings and his sculptures, his drawings and collages and prints and ceramics.

Picasso, who often worked in series and thereby invited the public to observe some of his transformations, was reluctant to analyze his own work. "That is for others to do if they wish," he said. But he did resist interpretations that made his art seem like a form of research. In 1923 he observed that "in my opinion to search means nothing in painting. To find, is the thing." Perhaps what he was saying was that he was somewhat ambivalent about being known as the master of transformations—as the man who knew how to change a view of a studio into a view of a Spanish city ravaged by war. Perhaps what he really wanted to be known as was the man who could paint this thing and that thing and yet another thing—a studio, an atrocity, a lover, a child. He wanted to meet the broad public in the variety of its experience—in its experience of love, in its experience of war. How he managed it all would remain an enigma.

Picasso may not have understood much of anything about Stalinism, but he had an instinct for finding himself in the midst of life's upheavals and obsessions. No wonder his themes include love, sex, politics, realism, surrealism, abstraction, rationalism, irrationalism, engagement, retreat. Surely the magically expansive character of his achievement made it imperative that the public be kept a bit in the dark. When he said that art is "the product of calculations ... that are frequently unknown to the author," and further observed that a work of art "still goes on changing" even after it is finished, he was placing his connection with the public beyond the reach of reason. Perhaps this is what made Picasso such a key figure in a century when reason was so sorely tried. The hunger to grasp his unity, his underlying principle, is not unrelated to a desire to understand what the twentieth century was all about. A show such as "Picasso Érotique," which wraps up the entire career in a neat, sexy package, has the appeal of a grand conclusion painlessly reached. That the explanations are more complicated and more elusive—or that there might be no final explanation at all—is not the kind of news that many people are going to want to hear. ■

A German writer, a scandal, and the necessity of art.

Speak Not, Memory

By Ruth Franklin

I.

By the late 1940s, the German landscape had begun to show signs of recovery from the devastation of the war, but there was no Marshall Plan, no emergency rations, for German literature. Corrupted by the jargon and the propaganda of the Nazis, the German language was no longer suitable for literary purposes. The nation's writers, like its *Trummerfrauen*, or "rubble women," were charged with clearing away the debris. In response, they turned to what they called *Trummerliteratur*, or "literature of the rubble," which was marked by the fragmented, stuttering quality of its language. And with this strange new style of writing there arose a strange new optimism: the *Stunde-Null*, the zero hour, had arrived, and the nation could begin again, with a clean slate.

Wolfgang Koeppen, like many German writers, seemed initially to subscribe to this idea. Born in 1906, Koeppen had published two novels to quiet acclaim in the 1930s. He spent the war writing unfilmable documentaries for the German government, which he later described as his (admittedly limited) form of resistance. In 1944, fearing that Nazi colleagues would betray his stonewalling, he went underground, and eventually made his way to Munich. By the end of the war he was eager to pick up where he had left off. "I had survived Hitler and the war," he wrote in the foreword to his book *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground*, published in 1992. "For me that was a miracle. I hoped to find my way back to myself, to be able to write again the way I once had tried to do. In the freedom of the free writer."

But Koeppen understood that a truly clean slate was impossible for Germany after the Nazis. He saw the *Trummerliteratur* movement as an attempt to forget the past, not as an attempt to move beyond it. Long before the word *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* tripped lightly off the tongue of every German politician, Koeppen believed in the possibility, and the necessity, of coming to terms with the past. In a language dizzyingly rich with allusions to the deep history of German

The Hothouse
by Wolfgang Koeppen
translated by
Michael Hofmann
(W.W. Norton, 221 pp., $23.95)

Death in Rome
by Wolfgang Koeppen
translated by
Michael Hofmann
(W.W. Norton, 202 pp., $12.95 paper)

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culture, he wrote a trio of novels about postwar Germany, of which *The Hothouse*, published in 1953, is the extraordinary centerpiece. Bucking the *Trummerliteratur* trend of stripping language down to its grammatical essentials, Koeppen steeped his books in references to Wagner's operas, to German Romantic poetry, to early Germanic mythology. And he wrote baldly about the reverberations of Nazism into present-day German society and culture.

PERHAPS AS AN effort to pre-empt the hostility with which his book was certain to be met, Koeppen prefaced *The Hothouse* with a somewhat hesitant "Author's Note":

> The novel *The Hothouse* draws on current events, in particular recent political events, but only as a catalyst for the imagination of the author. Personalities, places, and events that occur in the story are nowhere identical with their equivalents in reality. References to living persons are neither made nor intended in what is a purely fictional narrative. The scope of the book lies beyond any connections with individuals, organizations, and events of the present time; which is to say, the novel has its own poetic truthfulness.

This is something more than the standard disclaimer. Koeppen's tone is obviously tongue-in-cheek, and his statements are internally contradictory. Regarding the references to real persons, he protests too much: political figures of the time are easily recognizable in *The Hothouse*. But his underlying assumption is serious. And this assumption, which he takes to be self-evident—that even if a novel is based in historical fact, "its own poetic truthfulness" can extend beyond the scope of its purported subject—would later cause him a great deal of trouble.

Nearly forty years after the publication of *The Hothouse*, Koeppen became embroiled in a scandal that virtually obliterated his reputation. In 1948, just before beginning work on his postwar novels, he had served as ghostwriter for the memoir of a Holocaust survivor. In 1992 that book was republished under Koeppen's own name, and identified as a novel. In his foreword to the new edition, Koeppen said that he had reconstituted the story from notes, and that "it became my story." But when the survivor's original manuscript was discovered and published, Koeppen was excoriated as a plagiarist and a liar.

Koeppen's name has become so identified with this scandal that it is no longer possible to write about him without addressing it, as Michael Hofmann's introduction to *The Hothouse* attests. But in fact Hofmann's translation has arrived at just the right time. Now that the dust of outrage has settled, the incident bears re-examination: not as an exercise in bitter recriminations against an opportunist, but as an object lesson in the dangers of using historical memory as the only standard by which to judge writing about the Holocaust. And it is hard to think of a German writer of his generation who has written more sensitively or more profoundly about the Holocaust and its effects than Wolfgang Koeppen.

II.

AT THE BEGINNING of *The Hothouse*, the politician Keetenheuve is on a train headed to Bonn. He had moved to England in 1933 to protest Hitler's rise to power, and he returned to Germany in 1945 to help rebuild the nation. Throwing himself enthusiastically into his committee work, he soon realized that his dreams of German reconstruction had been overly optimistic. Laws can be passed remaking a country, but people cannot be legislated into being something that they are not: "People had naturally remained the same, it didn't even occur to them to change, merely because the form of government had changed, because the uniforms thronging the streets and making babies were now olive-green instead of brown, black, and field gray, and once again everything came to grief over petty matters of detail, the thick ooze on the streambed that blocked the flow of fresh water, and left everything as it was before."

Despite these reservations, or perhaps because of them, Keetenheuve (Koeppen does not give him a first name) devoted himself to his work all the more fervently, neglecting his wife, who had a lesbian affair and then overdosed on drugs and alcohol. Here we find him at the start of the novel: distraught and guilt-ridden over the death of his wife, returning to Bonn to serve in a parliament in whose program he no longer believes. His skepticism about the efforts to rebuild Germany is mirrored even in the train in which he is riding: "There was a whiff of fresh paint, of reconditioning and renovation; these days you traveled in comfort on the Bundesbahn; while on the outside all the carriages were daubed blood red." The trains have been spiffed up, especially in comparison with the freight cars that used to travel the German rails, but the improvement is only superficial, and the train's color serves as a reminder—if an inadvertent and ironic one—of the railroad's earlier function. Whereas once the crimes were concealed inside the cars, now the color of blood is broadcast on the outside for all the world to see. And rather than the usual rhythmic clattering, Keetenheuve hears the wheels of the train sing out "Wagalaweia"—in Germany even the trains, or perhaps especially the trains, speak Wagner's language.

Keetenheuve's wife, too, was a relic of the Nazi era: named Elke, after a figure in Germanic mythology, she was the daughter of a Gauleiter, or Nazi district governor. When Germany surrendered, the Gauleiter and his wife committed suicide, and Elke, age sixteen, fled to the forest. There she witnessed the "ghosts" of the war emerging from their places of imprisonment:

> famished bodies, broken skeletons, starved eyes, and anguished brows, they came crawling out of the caves where they had been hiding, they broke out of the death camps, they roamed as far as their bony, beaten feet could carry them, the cage was open, they were the persecuted, the harried, the prisoners of the government, who had given Elke her privileged upbringing.

This is Keetenheuve's voice, not Elke's; despite her direct connection to the Nazi party, she is impervious to any feelings of guilt or complicity. Though Keetenheuve literally must drag her out of the rubble, she remains sympathetic to her father's party until the end, accusing the Gauleiter only of "taking the cowardly way out" and leaving her to the "dragons"—that is, the Allies. And she cannot comprehend why Keetenheuve rejected the Nazis and went abroad during the war: "it was something she couldn't herself see or feel; he was just a moralist."

THE LANGUAGE OF *The Hothouse* is a pastiche of genres and styles: narrative, free indirect discourse, interior monologue, quotations from poems and songs—from the hybrid German of "*Bei mir bist du schön*" to Heine's "*Lorelei*," Novalis, Wagner, folksongs, and other elements of *echt deutsch* culture. The pointed incorporation of such citations is an important aspect of Koeppen's work. By virtue of his own example, he demonstrates that it is impossible to speak this language—with all of its built-in connotations and cultural allusions—un-self-consciously after the war. Keetenheuve cannot even listen to his own thoughts without questioning the terms in which they are expressed. Regarding the death of his wife, he muses: "'Widower' was a funny word, a grimly funny word, a somewhat dusty notion from a staider

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era." Though the word has similarly old-fashioned connotations in English, one is inclined to read more into Koeppen's reference to a "staider era": widowers are unusual in Germany in the 1950s, because war makes only widows.

The elegance of Koeppen's language threatens at times to obscure the fact that *The Hothouse* is rooted in disgust: its protagonist's disgust with the Bundestag, with the chancellor, with the entire *Wirtschaftswunder*, with himself most of all. Here he is on the city of Bonn:

> The Rhine was now wending its way between flat beds, a winding silver ribbon. Distant hills arced up out of the early morning haze.... A hothouse climate flourished in the basin between the hills; the air stagnated over the river and its banks. Villas stood beside the water, roses were bred, prosperity strode through the parkland wielding hedge clippers, gravel crunched crisply under the pensioner's lightweight footwear, Keetenheuve would never join their ranks, never own a home here, never trim or breed roses, the *nobiles, Rosa indica*, which put him in mind of *Erysipelas traumaticum* [*Wundrose*], faith healers were at work here, Germany was one large public hothouse, Keetenheuve took in rare flora, greedy, curious plants, giant phalluses like chimney stacks full of billowing smoke, blue-green, red-yellow, toxic.

Wolfgang Koeppen by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

However beautifully drawn the "hothouse" is, the underlying metaphor is one of disease. Thoughts of hothouse flowers lead Keetenheuve to think of the skin infection known in German as *Wundrose*, an inflammation that starts from small wounds and then spreads. Perhaps it is a point of optimism that the disease infecting Germany is a superficial one; but still it is disfiguring, and potentially fatal.

The toxicity that pervades the hothouse is the toxicity of Nazism. (Hitler, who almost never appears in the novel by name, is at one point referred to as "the Braunau bacillus.") Like the girl in Hawthorne's story "Rappaccini's Daughter," the inhabitants of the city have been bred in poison, and it oozes inescapably from their pores. At one point the committee on which Keetenheuve sits is debating the building of new housing. "How were these settlements any different from the National Socialist settlements for large families, or the SA and SS settlements, only cheaper and narrower and grimmer and shabbier?" Keetenheuve wonders. "And if you looked at the blueprints, it was the Nazi idiom they were still building in, and if you looked at the names of the architects, it was the Nazi architects who were still working." As Keetenheuve has long since realized, changing the nation is not as simple as changing the government. The residue of National Socialism lingers in the postwar landscape, where even thunderstorms seem "manufactured, an artificial entertainment in the restoration businesses of Fatherland & Sons Inc."

By the end of the novel, the bacillus has infected Keetenheuve as well, albeit in a different way. After a day in which he finds a document describing plans to incorporate the army into NATO and is bribed not to reveal it with an offer of the ambassadorship to Guatemala, he awakes in his parliamentary housing feeling as though he, too, is a victim of Nazism:

> He awoke. He woke early. He woke from unquiet sleep. He woke from unquiet sleep in the ghetto.... Keetenheuve thought: The ghettos of Hitler and Himmler, the ghettos of the transports and the victims, the walls and perimeters, the incinerator ovens of Treblinka, the uprising of the Jews in Warsaw, all the camps after the war, all the barracks that housed us, all the Nissen huts, the bunkers, the DPs and the refugees—the government, the parliament, officialdom and underlings, and now we are a foreign body in the sluggish flesh of our capital city.

What are we to make of Keetenheuve's apparent identification with the victims of the Holocaust? Obviously the "parliamentary ghetto," despite any superficial similarity, bears no real resemblance to the "ghettos of the transports and the victims." But the incinerator ovens and the Nissen huts form a kind of continuity, a line that extends unbroken from the Third Reich into postwar Germany and beyond. The war continues to play itself out, unconsciously, in the very foundations of the German cities. In Keetenheuve's fevered thoughts—which progress from mild surrealism at the start of the novel to full-blown hysteria by the end—the parliamentary session, too, is a field of battle:

> The showdown in the plenary session affects everyone's lives, can mean everyone's death, it can bring this unfreedom and that slavery with it, it could mean your house falling down, your son losing his legs, your father being sent to Siberia, your daughter giving herself to three men for a tin of corned beef, that she'll share with you, you wolf it down.... No, that's not being too lurid.

The novel's ending is inevitable. With a leap from a bridge, Keetenheuve succumbs to "the grave in him."

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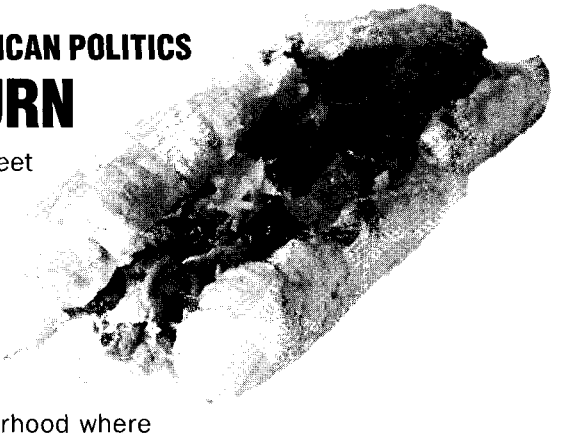
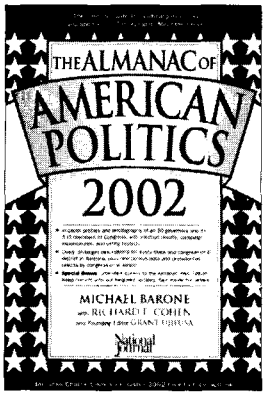


"The 1st runs north on both sides of the Broad Street corridor to include much of black North Philadelphia and south through most of heavily Italian South Philadelphia, where Italian families and their grocery stores and restaurants have been pressed tightly into narrow English and Indian-named streets under a tangle of overhead wires; this is the neighborhood where the various Rockys were filmed and the original Philadelphia cheesesteaks are sold."

—The Almanac of American Politics on Pennsylvania's 1st Congressional District



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III.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, NEITHER critics nor readers welcomed Koeppen's indictments of West Germany in the thrall of its "economic miracle." One review of *The Hothouse* carried the headline "Not to be touched with a barge-pole." A bookstore in Bonn canceled a scheduled reading by Koeppen when the police said they would be unable to guarantee his safety.

In 1954, with the appearance of his third postwar novel, *Death in Rome*, Koeppen showed how little the controversy had shaken him. (Its English translation has just been re-issued by W.W. Norton.) *Death in Rome* tracks four members of a disintegrating German family: Gottlieb Judejahn, a Nazi war criminal on the run after his conviction at Nuremberg; his son Adolf, who has rebelled against him by joining the priesthood; Judejahn's brother-in-law Friedrich Wilhelm Pfaffrath, a government official under the Nazis who is now, like the politicians in *The Hothouse*, trying to regain legitimacy; and Friedrich's son Siegfried, a composer. As Judejahn slinks around Rome stalking a Jewish barmaid, we watch Siegfried and Adolf struggle to separate themselves from their parents' generation, but the price they pay is their exile from German society.

Not surprisingly, *Death in Rome* was received even less enthusiastically than its predecessor. Critics were especially hostile to Koeppen's use of unadulterated Nazi language in Judejahn's profanity-laced, sickeningly anti-Semitic monologues. Koeppen fell silent again, as he had after the war. Between 1954 and 1992, he would publish a brief quasi-memoir, titled *Youth*; travel books on Russia, America, and France; and various essays and reviews—but no more fiction. And the German literary world liked Koeppen's silence even less than it had liked his novels. Journalists questioned him about his activities; he evaded them.

Then, three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Jüdische Verlag, a ninety-year-old publisher of books on Jewish topics, which had just been acquired by the venerable German house Suhrkamp, published what it said was a new novel by Koeppen. The book was called *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground*, and in its foreword Koeppen gave an account of how the book had come to be written, presenting himself as a ghostwriter who had worked from an outline of Littner's story. He explained that an acquaintance of his had established a small press in Munich just after the war. One day he received a visitor:

> To the new publisher came a man from the German Hell. Once a respected citizen of his city, a stamp dealer with an international reputation, then a Jew who was deported, tortured in ghettos and extermination camps, who had stood before death's door and in mass graves had gazed upon those already dead.... Returning to his own city, destroyed by the bombs of its liberators, he believed he saw murderers. He wanted to scream, but he only choked. He wanted to speak and he looked into faces that had approved of it all.
>
> I was not one of those people who had known nothing. Hell was everywhere. I was conscious of my helplessness. Who simply went out to the market square and screamed? And in those years each person's own death stood behind him.
>
> The Jew told the new publisher that his God had held His hand above him. The publisher listened, he noted places and dates. The escaped man sought a writer. The publisher reported the unbelievable to me. I had dreamed of it. The publisher asked me, "Do you want to write it?"
>
> The mistreated man wanted to escape, he emigrated to America. He promised me an honorarium of two care packages each month.
>
> I ate the American provisions and wrote a German Jew's tale of suffering. So it became my story.

The book is written in the fragmented style of a diary. After surviving *Kristallnacht* and a near-deportation to Poland, the nameless narrator flees Germany. After a brief stay in Prague, he makes his way east, and ends up in the town of Zbaracz, near Lvov, in what was then Poland and is now Ukraine. There he and his companion Janina, who will become his wife, spend the remainder of the war, first in the Zbaracz ghetto, hiding during the SS raids in a crevice that he digs out beneath the floor, and then, after the liquidation of the ghetto, in the airless cellar of a Polish man's house. The narrator is sustained through his ordeals by his faith in God and by the efforts of a German woman he calls Christa, his former partner in the stamp business, who continually sends money and even undertakes the long and treacherous journey to visit him in the ghetto. The book ends with the liberation of the narrator and Janina by the Russians.

The German press was initially thrilled by the appearance of a new Koeppen novel. But then critics started to look more closely. A note inside the front cover revealed that the "novel" was "an unaltered reprint of the first edition of Jakob Littner: Notes From a Hole in the Ground, Munich, Kluger, 1948." It did not take long before people were asking who this Jakob Littner was, and why the "reprint" of his book had appeared under Koeppen's name. The critic Eberhard Falcke took the Jüdische Verlag to task for not at least appending an afterword elaborating upon "the complicated way in which literature and contemporary history meet" in Koeppen's book. Meanwhile, in one interview Koeppen said that in the first edition "Jakob Littner" had been a "pseudonym" for him; in another interview he claimed that the "notes" that Littner had given him constituted no more than "three scraps of paper." In short time it was reported that a man named Jakob Littner, a stamp dealer, had indeed lived in Munich during the war, had emigrated to New York in 1947, and had died in 1951. Koeppen died in 1996 without ever saying anything further on the topic.

IN 1995, REINHARD ZACHAU, a professor of German at the University of the South in Tennessee, came upon *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground*. He was so impressed with Koeppen's novel that he contacted Suhrkamp to ask whether the English rights were available. But he became suspicious when the publisher said the book could be republished only exactly as it was, without the addition of notes or an introduction. Zachau had read the newspaper reports that a real person named Jakob Littner had existed, and he decided to do some research on his own.

In the Ship Passenger Arrival Records at the National Archives in Washington, he discovered an entry for Jakob Littner, "age 64, citizen of Hungary, accompanied by Janina, 47." The Littners had arrived in New York on July 17, 1947. After months of fruitless research in the archives of the Joint Distribution Committee, YIVO, and other Jewish organizations, Zachau managed to locate Kurt Grübler, a distant relative of Littner's living in Rockville, Maryland. Grübler had been writing a family history, and Richard Korngold, Littner's stepson, had given him Littner's original manuscript, which exists in two copies that were typed and bound in Munich in 1945. One hundred eighty-three pages long, it bears the title *Mein Weg durch die Nacht* (*My Journey Through the Night*).

With Zachau's discovery of this original manuscript, and the subsequent publication of lengthy excerpts from it in the German studies quarterly *Colloquia Germanica*, it became obvious that Koeppen's version of the creation of *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground* had not been entirely truthful. At this point, of

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course, it is impossible to know exactly what transpired between Koeppen and Littner. But a comparison of *My Journey Through the Night* and *Jakob Littner's Notes* seems to demonstrate that Koeppen worked from Littner's typescript, not from the "three scraps of paper" that he said he had received from Herbert Kluger. Koeppen's novel follows the general story line of Littner's manuscript, but he made considerable formal adjustments, changed some names, deleted various people and events, and added some scenes and details apparently of his own invention. It may be that Littner provided Koeppen, either orally or in writing, with additional material not found in the original manuscript, but no evidence of this has come to light. We must assume that any discrepancies between the original manuscript and Koeppen's version of it are the products of Koeppen's imagination.

THE PAST FEW years have brought a number of controversial instances in which Holocaust memoirs or so-called "autobiographical novels" that purported to be authentic turned out to be fiction, most notably Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* and Benjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments*. But *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground* appears to be the first time that a text believed to be fiction turned out to be based on fact. And, not surprisingly, Koeppen was posthumously castigated for his temerity in tampering with the holy writ of a Holocaust testimonial. "You'd think by 1992 it would have been axiomatic not to alter a Holocaust memoir," Phil McCombs wrote in a lengthy piece about the Koeppen-Littner affair in *The Washington Post*. "This is sacred ground. Every detail, nuance, memory—no matter how terrible, or banal—is precious." In an article accompanying the excerpts from Littner's original manuscript in *Colloquia Germanica*, Zachau enumerated some of the ways in which Koeppen had deviated from the original text, and speculated on the various psychological motivations behind them. Koeppen's guilt as a German after the war, Zachau argued, had led him to place far more emphasis on the roles of "'good' Germans" than Littner had in the original.

While savaging Koeppen, these critics reserved their highest praise for Littner's relative Kurt Grübler, who made his own contribution to the mountain of Littner-related texts last summer with the publication of *Journey Through the Night: Jakob Littner's Holocaust Memoir*. This book, which includes Grübler's translation of Littner's original manuscript—augmented by additional family information, a few footnotes, and copies of family photographs and documents—was intended as the final word on the Koeppen-Littner affair. "It is now possible to classify Koeppen's text as an elaborate fictionalization of authentic events where the dividing line between truth and fantasy remains blurred (see Wilkomirski)," Zachau wrote in his foreword to *Journey Through the Night*. "Kurt Grübler provides a more detailed account not only of Littner's experiences, but also of the bigger picture. The host of documents, relating to the Littner family, greatly enhances the historical objectivity of this book." McCombs went further: "Littner's often arch and flowery language, pious musings, plunges and flights of emotion—all the rich and flawed human material that Koeppen cut—has [*sic*] been restored in a loose but faithful translation by Grübler, whose notes and research are carefully set apart from the original text.... Littner's book, as he wrote it, is so powerful that it shakes you to your foundation and cannot be read without weeping. It is reality—there's no need for fancy writing."

But Koeppen's critics raise more questions than they answer. First, the comparison to Wilkomirski is utterly erroneous. Koeppen never claimed that he had experienced the events in *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground*. He said only—and honestly—that he had fictionalized events that Littner had experienced. And if Koeppen's book is indeed such an "elaborate fictionalization," was he necessarily wrong to call it a novel? His purpose, after all, was to write an artistically coherent text, not to write a news report.

And neither Zachau nor McCombs commented on the fact that Littner's one-hundred-eighty-three-page typescript—which amounted to one hundred forty-seven book pages in the 1948 version, even considering Koeppen's additions, deletions, and rewritings—had shrunk to just one hundred eight book pages in Grübler's translation. Or that Littner's original title, *My Journey Through the Night*, had been shortened to *Journey Through the Night*. Or that some interesting details seemed to have been left out—and others added. The urge to tamper with the "sacred ground" of the Holocaust memoir appears not to have been unique to Koeppen.

IV.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to *The Hothouse*, Michael Hofmann ruefully writes that Littner's manuscript "has been used as a stick with which to beat Koeppen for his own reissued work. This is, I think, unfair. Koeppen's version of the story may not be—could not be—authentic, but sentence for sentence and page for page, it is incontestably the better book: it begins with the titles." Whether or not one believes that it is a crime to alter a Holocaust testimony, if these books are evaluated on literary grounds—as a literary text ought to be evaluated—there is no doubt that Hofmann is right.

Koeppen's book is tighter and more streamlined than Littner's rambling report. Koeppen stripped out most of the subplots and the secondary characters, and he gave Littner's thoughts greater complexity. And he added some contextualization by inserting references to relevant contemporaneous events, as well as details that seem intended to capture Littner's frame of mind. But his most significant change was formal: he took Littner's lengthy memoir and broke it into sections of just a paragraph or two, shifting between past and present tense, to give it the feel of a diary. All in all, Koeppen allowed hardly a line of Littner's manuscript to pass unaltered into his version.

Koeppen's additions are mainly in the form of minor fictionalizations of the underlying factual matter. The following passages give a good sense of his method. (All citations from both texts are in my own translation.) Here is Littner:

> One day in October 1938, at five o'clock in the morning, a uniformed police officer appeared in my apartment, got me out of bed and said, after he had checked my identity papers, "I must arrest you."

And here is Koeppen:

> It was still dark when there was a ringing at my door. I woke and saw that it was only five. I knew immediately that something frightful awaited me. There is an old rumor that says people are "picked up" around this time of day.... I ran to the door as if I could stifle the noise of the bell.... My bare feet ran across the carpet as if it were cracking ice. I grasped the doorknob and suddenly glimpsed myself in the mirror of the hall closet: a heavy, gasping man in a too-short nightshirt.... But it was only the good-natured sergeant from the local precinct who stood in the empty staircase before my apartment door. We were old acquaintances, you could say, and up till yesterday we had greeted each other when we met in the street. His voice was soft and sympathetic as he said: "I have to arrest you, Mr. Littner!" Then he sized me up with a look that gradually turned stern, as if it irritated him to see me in a nightshirt, and he rudely snapped: "Get dressed!"

Where Littner is content to state the

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facts—when and who and what—Koeppen has spun the episode of Littner's first arrest into a drama of its own. From the "old rumor" that superstitiously bodes ill to the "bare feet" and the "too-short nightshirt," Koeppen has fleshed out and dramatized the terse original, and in the process he has given it more emotional impact. This is especially evident in the detail of the nightshirt, which allows the embarrassment that the narrator feels at the beginning of the passage to spin into full shame by the end.

KOEPPEN'S CHANGES MOST commonly consist in making events more ironic or more dramatic than they actually were. Later in the book, Littner receives a heartbreaking series of letters from his son and daughter-in-law in the Warsaw ghetto describing their horrible circumstances. In the original manuscript, Littner answers their cries for help with letters and money transfers, but his responses to his daughter-in-law's final letter go unanswered. In Koeppen's version, a decree forbidding Jews to use the postal services is passed the day after Littner received his daughter-in-law's last letter, rendering him unable to respond. (In fact, Littner writes that the prohibition was issued somewhat later.) At another point, Koeppen and Littner use nearly identical language to describe SS soldiers cutting off the beards of elderly Jews, but Koeppen adds one final detail: "The leader of the synagogue, an elderly, pious Jew, hanged himself on the evening of the day this happened."

Koeppen's additions, in the clear light of hindsight, appear to be the work of an outsider, a person at a greater remove from the events of the war than a survivor could be. This is evident in the following passage, identical in the two texts, in which Littner cites the letter he received from the Judenrat in the town of Borszczow responding to an inquiry about his siblings:

> In response to your communication of December 5 we inform you that Sida Littner, Irma Littner and Victor Blum died on November 11, 1941 in Borszczow and were buried that day in the local Jewish cemetery.
>
> For the Judenrat
> (signature illegible)

Koeppen's text quotes this letter word for word, but he adds just after it: "Who indeed would want to clearly set down his name at the end of such a document?" Where Littner reports the illegibility of the signature simply as a matter of fact, Koeppen reads into it a certain confession of shame. Whether there is any validity to this no one can know; but it certainly seems psychologically plausible.

One of the most interesting of Koeppen's alterations is his treatment of Littner's spiritual life. A dominant theme of the original manuscript is Littner's profound religiosity. "In overcoming seemingly inescapable situations, faith in God must play a crucial role," he writes in the introduction. "True faith in God produces an unshakable sense of security and superhuman powers." But Koeppen has Littner start out as an extremely secular Jew—so assimilated, in fact, that he is accustomed to celebrating Christmas with his non-Jewish friends, and laments not being in the mood for it after the events of November 1938. Instead, he goes for a walk on Christmas Eve, and winds up at the burned-out synagogue that was destroyed on *Kristallnacht*. "Should I stand before the wall and say my New Year's prayer here, like my brethren at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem?" he wonders. Only now does a glimmer of devoutness awaken in him: "I, a quiet businessman in our century of progress, feel a sense of piety, of reverie, a breath of the spirit world." It is easy to imagine Littner's reaction upon reading this passage; any religious Jew, not to mention a religious Jew who had survived the Holocaust, would be appalled at the thought of celebrating Christmas. But again, there is no doubt that the character who emerges as a result is more complex, more imperfect.

IN LIGHT OF the allegations that Zachau, Grübler, and others have made against Koeppen, it should be pointed out that there are certain adjustments to Littner's text of which he is *not* guilty. He did not, as has been frequently claimed, portray the Germans with greater sympathy than Littner had. As evidence of this Zachau cites Koeppen's addition of so-called "praise" of the field commandant in Zbaracz: "How desirable it would be if all German masters were like this one. We would race through the countryside and give up our last belongings." These lines are extremely misleading out of context, not to mention poorly translated. Here is a more complete version of the passage:

> The field commandant is a man who does not bother himself with anything. He sits in his slippers in his requisitioned house and has ducks roasted for him. How much we wished that all German masters were like this one! We would hurry from one part of the countryside to the other, selling and trading our last possessions so as to take out all their desire for cruelty on ducks, their cannibalistic longing for human flesh, as the song goes: "When Jewish blood streams from the knife."

Clearly the reason Koeppen's narrator wishes that "all German masters were like this one" is not due to any positive personal attributes that the commander possesses, even in Koeppen's version. (The detail of the ducks, incidentally, appears to be Koeppen's invention.) The point is that it is a rare blessing to have a commandant who is more interested in killing ducks than in killing Jews. Certainly the other details that Koeppen has added—the Germans' "cannibalistic longing for human flesh," the gruesome line of the song that he cites—cannot be perceived as in any way signifying "praise" of the German commandant, as Zachau would have it.

Moreover, the claim that Koeppen "displays a tendency to emphasize the role of 'good Germans'" seems truly bizarre in light of one of the most extraordinary elements of Littner's text: his close relationship with his business partner Christine (Christa in Koeppen's version), whom he praises, often effusively, at every possible opportunity. Repeatedly Littner calls Christine "this good spirit," "this faithful soul," "our Munich angel," and other endearments. Just a few sentences after Littner laments the deaths of his son and daughter-in-law in the Warsaw ghetto, he mentions that Christine has just sent him news of the death of her mother, noting that "Her pain was also mine." So close were the two that just a short time after suffering his own tragic loss, Littner was able to sympathize with hers. He also details Christine's efforts to help him: her gifts of money and food when he is in the Zbaracz ghetto, her extremely risky visit to the ghetto, her collaboration with a sympathetic local doctor to help him, and her continual infusions of money to the man in whose cellar he is hiding. The final lines of the memoir describe his reunion with Christine after the war: "We had reached our goal: to shake in eternal gratitude the hand of the noble person who had saved our lives. Without Christine we would certainly not be alive today! May God reward Christine for everything, which we are not able to do ourselves. With this wish may the present report end."

V.

IF ONE JUDGES *Jakob Littner's Notes From a Hole in the Ground* based on its consistency with Littner's original manuscript, then of course it does not hold up. How could it? Fidelity to historical fact was not the point. Littner himself disavowed the book in a letter to Koeppen after its publication, saying that he did not recognize his own story. He did not recognize it because of the extent to which Koeppen had novelized it. And Koeppen

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did not pretend to have done anything but that. What else could his statement that "it became my story" mean?

In contrast to Koeppen, Grübler goes out of his way to convince the reader that *Journey Through the Night* is an authentic representation of Littner's manuscript. The book's subtitle is "Jakob Littner's Holocaust Memoir." The jacket copy states that the contents comprise Littner's "own true story, appearing for the first time in any language, with additional family and historical material provided by a younger relative." Zachau's foreword, which summarizes the book's history, serves to validate Grübler's version. He notes that Grübler has added information from his interviews with Littner's stepson and daughter, but emphasizes that Grübler has taken the pains of a careful scholar to distinguish this extraneous material by setting it in italics and within brackets. But when *Journey Through the Night* is compared with the original German manuscript (the title of which, of course, is *My Journey Through the Night*), a number of discrepancies become apparent. If indeed it is a crime to tamper in any way with a Holocaust memoir, then Grübler is as guilty as Koeppen. (The publication of Littner's manuscript in German is planned for sometime next year; until its release, the full text is accessible to the public only through the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.)

Grübler has substantially shortened Littner's original text, deleting sentences and entire scenes. No ellipses or other markings appear in the English version to indicate that such cuts have been made. Instead, the lines that fall before and after the deletions have been simply slapped together, which gives the text a choppy, disconnected feel. In addition, Grübler has often condensed Littner's language, and he has cut significant details that help the reader visualize the scene. His version of Littner's story, in addition to rendering the text less readable, at times is actually misleading. An example of this is the passage that describes Littner's departure from Munich. Here is Littner:

> On March 1, 1939 I finally left Munich with ten marks in my pocket (I was not permitted to take any more with me) and a suitcase of clothing and linen.
>
> Farewell to Munich! For me this was farewell not only to the beautiful city, but also to those people who had been important to me over the course of these last 26 years. I knew that our separation hurt them no less than it hurt me; I was certain that despite all the acts of discrimination that I had to suffer, they stuck by me and abhorred such acts of violence. But what can that mean in a "totalitarian city"! The fact that I also had to leave behind Christine and her family was particularly painful for me.
>
> Though my papers were quite in order, I was harassed at the border by an SS inspection. But this last humiliation, too, was quickly endured and I was permitted to cross into a free land. It is impossible even approximately to describe the feelings I had at that moment. What good fortune to be a free person again, with no more torture, never again having to see the symbol of racial hatred. It was as if I could once again breathe easily. What meaning did economic difficulties or other such problems have in view of the fact: I am free!
>
> Having arrived in Prague, at first I stood perplexed in front of the station....

And here is Grübler:

> On March 1, 1939, I left Munich, on a train bound for Prague, with ten Reichsmark in my pocket and a piece of hand luggage filled with spare clothes. Several fellow passengers with Polish passports sought to reach the same destination. At the border several SS officers came to inspect passports. They asked routine questions and after stamping the vital documents returned them to their owners. As soon as the train left the station and crossed over into the still free country, I felt greatly relieved. Upon my arrival in Prague, I stood next to the terminal not knowing where to go.

More than a few details have simply disappeared from Grübler's version—and others have been added. What has happened to the two long and often quite moving paragraphs in which Littner laments having to leave his city and yet rejoices in his newfound freedom? In sharp contrast with Grübler's clipped summary, his language is specific, even flowery. Gone are Littner's somewhat complicated thoughts about leaving behind his non-Jewish friends in Munich, and the omnipresent encomium to Christine. In their place have been inserted some apparently counterfactual lines about the presence of other passengers with Polish passports (if there were such passengers, Littner does not mention them) and the ease with which Littner crosses the border (in fact, we learn from the original manuscript, he suffers a "last humiliation" at the hands of the SS). Although Grübler's English is obviously unidiomatic, these discrepancies constitute more than just bad translation.

Grübler's text is least faithful to the original when the events taking place involve the Germans, which, needless to say, is fairly often. Ironically, considering the

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allegations made against Koeppen, Grübler takes it upon himself to sharpen Littner's often completely neutral language regarding his persecutors. In one instance where the original text reads simply *die Deutschen*, "the Germans," Grübler has rendered it in English as "the butchers." Two pages later, where the original manuscript has *die Behörde*, "the authorities," the English reads "the callous despots." And Grübler's embellishments are not limited to Germans: on the next page *dem Beamten der Ukrainischen Miliz*, "the Ukrainian militia official," is translated as "the Ukrainian puppet." At another point, where there is no reference in the original to the SS at all, Grübler has added a line calling them "malevolent demons."

EVEN WHEN GRÜBLER is neither adding nor leaving out material, his translations are often so poor as to entirely disregard important details of subtext. In Littner's description of the SS invasion of Zbaracz, for instance, there is a clear biblical reference that Grübler skips over. "Robbery, murder, rape came over us like a destructive hailstorm," Littner writes. "No Jewish home was spared." This should ring in the ears of any Jew who has attended a Passover seder as an ironic reversal of the sufferings of the Egyptians, who were tormented by a series of plagues, including hail and locusts, and finally by the tenth plague, the slaying of the firstborn. Since the Jews had marked their homes with the blood of the lamb, the angel of death passed them over, but no Egyptian home was spared. The lines have dropped out of Grübler, along with the Exodus reference; instead, we have: "A reign of terror commenced afterwards. Initially, several Jewish dwellings were ransacked." Another apparent reference to the ten plagues comes a few pages later, as the SS raids are winding down: "Like a bloodthirsty swarm of locusts this gang [the SS] headed toward Tarnopol to destroy the harvest in its own way." Predictably, the metaphor of the destruction of the harvest is lost on Grübler, who translates: "They moved to Tarnopol like a bloodthirsty swarm of locust [*sic*] where larger numbers of potential victims awaited their arrival."

Grübler's translation suffers from a myriad of careless errors, as well as from its author's evidently loose grasp of English idiom, grammar, and even spelling. Sloppy mistakes such as these, together with the more systematic ideological problems with this translation, confirm the impression that *Journey Through the Night* is no more reliable a representation of Jakob Littner's manuscript than Wolfgang Koeppen's novelization of it.

VI.

MORE THAN FIFTY years after the liberation of the camps, Theodor Adorno's commandment that "to write poetry after the Holocaust is barbaric" is still widely and uncritically cited. Properly understood, Adorno's dictum would seem to apply not only to poetry but to every genre of literature—for surely poetry does not hold a monopoly on aestheticization. And in the face of the mounting pile of poems, novels, and every other conceivable form of "Holocaust literature," it is easy to see why one might find something morally obnoxious about shaping texts from this collection of ashes and rubble, especially when the ashes and the rubble contain fragments of one's own family history. Only pure testimony, such as the one hundred eighty-three onion-skin pages of Jakob Littner's original manuscript, would seem to pass the strictest moral muster.

But the relation between morality and facticity turns out to be more complicated, and more vexing. It is becoming increasingly clear that to consider any text "pure testimony," completely free from aestheticizing influences, is naïve. In fact, every canonical Holocaust text involves some graying of the line between fiction and reality. Everyone now knows that Anne Frank's diary was edited by her father, who deleted Anne's musings on her awakening sexuality and on her complex relationship with her mother. (The diary has been republished in a "definitive edition," with the deleted entries restored.) Elie Wiesel's *Night* is based closely on Wiesel's experiences during the war and is generally read as an autobiography, though it is technically a novel; but Tadeusz Borowski's harrowing stories, such as "This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," though told in the first person by a narrator named Tadeusz and closely hewing to the outline of Borowski's experiences at Auschwitz, are presented as fiction. (Borowski originally published some of these stories in a volume titled *We Were in Auschwitz*, which was bound with strips of cloth from concentration-camp uniforms. Welcome Rain Press has recently published an English version of that shattering book.) Even the testimonials that seem the most ragged and therefore the most pure—the interviews with survivors collected at Yale's Holocaust Video Archive and elsewhere—are by necessity just a little more, or a little less, than the full story.

If we follow Adorno's prescription to its logical conclusion, in fact, any testimony becomes impossible. For every act of memory is also an act of literature. Total recall is beyond human capabilities, and so our minds shape and distill and pound the chaos of life into something resembling a coherent narrative. From the very moment we begin the activity of remembering, we place some kind of editorial framework—some principle of selection, no matter how simple or how neutral—around the events of the past. Even Jakob Littner's original manuscript, as close as it would appear to undiluted testimony, bears the marks of an imagination at work. Littner quotes from letters that he received from relatives while he was in the Zbaracz ghetto, but he has edited out extraneous details, such as the prices charged in the ghetto for various types of food, to make them read more smoothly. Grübler substitutes the full versions of the letters, but in being true to the historical record he is again unfaithful to Littner's manuscript.

Of course there is an important difference between the "editing" that our minds do instinctively (it could also be called "forgetting") and the deliberate, goal-driven work that an editor performs on a literary text, fact or fiction. But the end result is still the same: a text, whether written or contained within the mind, that is a faithful and yet inevitably incomplete representation of actual events. Memory will always make mistakes. This is a fact that our frantically commemorative culture seems unwilling to recognize. With our best-selling memoirs and our sophisticated psychotherapeutic techniques, we have elevated memory to a position of absolute authority. Memory provides a thrill of authenticity that history certainly cannot provide. In the same spirit, physical objects that seem to allow us links to the past—letters rescued from the ghetto, or the horrifying mound of spectacles on display at Auschwitz—are accorded the status of relics. They become sacrosanct; and the person who alters them—Wolfgang Koeppen, for example—is condemned in language that was once reserved for blasphemers.

But such relics, be they textual or physical, are misleading. Since they feel real, they provide an illusion of immediacy, of identity with lived experience. One can easily picture Jakob Littner in the ghetto, writing letters that would never be answered. But in fact such relics erect a great barrier against the understanding of experience. The believer is convinced that when he touches a fragment of a saint's bone or hair, he occupies for a moment the same physical space that the venerated person once occupied, and thus—somehow—has some experience of him or her. But this cannot be true. Bones and hair, of saints or of survivors, tell us almost nothing. By fooling us into thinking otherwise, by deluding us into thinking that

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the imagination can be completely banished from any reconstruction of experience, by setting a standard of truth that only the brutest and most positivistic facts can meet, the reliquary attitude dissuades us from making the exertions that are necessary for a deeper grasp of what once happened.

There is certainly a difference between fact and fiction; but there are many kinds of facts. And the understanding of human experience requires more than looking or touching or remembering. It requires the complete engagement not of the senses or the emotions, but of the mind. For this reason, the experience of the past is sometimes made most accessible by the means of art. Art does not always lie—unless ordering, editing, and interpreting are the same as lying; but in that case memory also lies, and less intelligently. In his own way, then, Wolfgang Koeppen can tell us as much—and as little—about the Holocaust as Jakob Littner or anybody else. ■

The Professor of Complacence

By SIMON BLACKBURN

Rorty and His Critics edited by Robert B. Brandom

(Blackwell, 410 pp., $29.95)

I.

IF YOU VISIT a mighty good school, you might find some big words written over the gate: words such as Truth, Reason, Knowledge, Understanding, or even Wisdom. If the school is old enough and in another country, you might even find a mention of God, though this word may now be an embarrassment, or regarded as purely decorative, or if the word was once there, perhaps it has been erased and something secular substituted. But nobody would want to erase Truth, Reason, and the rest, would they?

Richard Rorty would. Like Nietzsche more than a century ago, he believes that these words have inherited the same illusory magic that once hovered around the idea of a deity. They are supposed to represent something Big. They stand for an ideal: the accurate representation of reality. This reality functions in our minds as a sort of non-human authority, to which we have to answer, and compared with which we are always in danger of falling short. Yet mankind must now realize that there is no such authority. Previously, even when the deity was swept away by the Enlightenment, Truth remained in its place, the last absolute—but now it, too, has to bow out, as the world-historical moment turns, and humanity continues its long journey to emancipation.

That journey, Rorty continues, was once regarded as taking us from ignorance to knowledge, or from darkness to light. But we should no longer hold such a view of our development, for "no area of culture, and no period of history, gets Reality more right than any other." The best that the journey can accomplish is to cement the freedom to speak our minds, and to usher in ever-renewable vocabularies expressing new adventures in self-understanding. For words are tools, and the point of our utterances is not to answer to the Forms or to represent the intrinsic nature of reality, it is to meet our needs. Words are Darwinian adaptations, not for copying but for coping.

Once this is thoroughly understood, even the words on the school gate can be given a kind of use, although it is a poor shadow of what those who inscribed them there intended. Demythologized, those grand terms serve only as what Rorty has called "wistful, top-level protestations of good will." Polemically, however, they are available as weapons of reaction, when those who defend old vocabularies and old ways of life invoke them to repel any new kids on the block. (Rorty is well aware that this is how outraged defenders of what they take to be the real standards of Truth and Reason will fulminate against him, and he enjoys the fulmination.) But the principal use of these words is as badges of social solidarity. We describe things as true when we agree with them, and we describe people as reasonable when their minds move in the same ways as our minds. When the words on the gate are read properly, therefore, we should not talk about the love of the truth but about the love of solidarity. The highest human good is conversation, and truth is what audiences let you get away with.

THE COLLECTION OF essays that Robert Brandom has assembled is but one of many books prompted by Rorty's startling, brilliant, and extensive writings on these themes. Its contributors are as heavy a bunch of philosophical hitters as could well be gathered, and Rorty's responses to his critics display his extraordinary gift for ducking and weaving and laying smoke: he may have arrived at Paris, but he got there by way of Princeton, and it shows. The volume is also an indicator of Rorty's significance, in the academy and in the culture at large. For his "anti-foundational" voice is not a lone voice. It is not even a minority voice. One hears it across large tracts of the humanities. Rorty is just the militant tendency of contemporary pragmatism, the Hezbollah of our disenchanted culture.

Rorty likes to project the image of himself as leading a movement ("we pragmatists"), and he has generously hailed many of the philosophers here, such as Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam, as standing alongside him, demolishing the school gates. So it is nicely ironic to see them making their excuses, like nervous guests fearing that a revel has gotten out of hand. Rorty, a gentlemanly host, is wonderfully polite and patient with these excuses, while not concealing his conviction that they are basically worthless. In his own mind, philosophers who argue against him are typically trapped in ways of thinking (what he would call a vocabulary) that, he believes, should simply be abandoned.

For this reason, Rorty seldom really argues back. He has arranged things for himself so that he does not have to do so. For he denies that philosophical progress comes about through argument. As he rightly reminds us, argument requires premises and conclusions that belong to the same conceptual family. Argument, it follows, is for conservatives. And real progress, by contrast, means "offering us sparkling new ideas or utopian visions of glorious new institutions," disabusing us of our old routes of inference and feeling, enabling us to forget where we once were. It does not mean anything so flat as mere argument.

This is a pretty formidable defensive tackle. When anyone produces a good

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reason for rejecting Rorty's views, he seems poised to say that his whole project is to transcend the logocentrism that endorses any such use of reason. A number of contributors to the present volume recognize this trap, and instead tackle pragmatism on its own ground, asking whether we could expect any good to come of some kind of *après*-truth culture. Jacques Bouveresse talks movingly of the plight of decent people in an intellectually rudderless Paris, where "we have some experience of what happens when rhetoric, the power of words, and the cult of personality prevails over reason, logic, and the rules of argumentation." Akeel Bilgrami follows Daniel C. Dennett in warning against the comfort that Rorty gives to the irresponsible and the subversive, to the bullshitters "prepared to speak or write in the requisite jargon, without any goal of getting things right nor even (like the liar) concealing the right things which he thinks he has got."

Rorty's retort is that he, too, can distinguish between the frivolous and the serious:

> That is a serious and important distinction. It is well exemplified in the contrast between the silliest, least literate, members of academic departments of literature and honest, hard-working, intellectually curious, laboratory scientists—just as the distinction between self-righteous priggery and tolerant conversability is well exemplified by the contrast between the sulkiest, least literate, members of analytic philosophy departments and honest, hard-working, intellectually curious, literary critics.

The point that these virtues and vices are spread across all sections of the academy is surely right. But the point is also a dodge, because the real question is whether, in the *après*-truth culture, they are still virtues and vices.

Rorty denies that love of truth is a special virtue by taunting his opponents that they have no way of telling who loves truth and who does not:

> What behavioural evidence is relevant? I doubt that there is more hope of accumulating relevant behavioural evidence here than there is when attempting to answer the question "Is he saved?" or "Does he love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind?" The question "Do you value truth?" seems to me as about as pointless as these latter questions.

Again, he has a point. We are apt to describe anybody as loving truth when they agree with us, both as to our certainties and as to our doubts. But Rorty does not pause to consider whether, in the salons of pragmatism, into which truth is denied entry, the question "Is he honest and curious?" must go the same way as the question "Does he love truth?" And he does not pause to consider whether, while the question "Does he love truth?" may indeed be intractable in general, it is highly tractable when the truth in question becomes concrete. If you have not committed a crime, you would prefer to fall into the hands of a police department that loves the truth about who commits crimes, and loves it more than it loves just coping by cozying up to the judges and juries who can give it a successful prosecution record.

II.

Anyone wanting to protect the school gates should study the general rhythm of the interchanges here, for Rorty is a formidable opponent, and few of his critics do much damage. Typically, they start by saluting Rorty's intellectual ancestors, especially a great trio who ushered in our age of philosophical doubts about meaning, observation, and theory: Willard Quine, Wilfrid Sellars, and Thomas Kuhn. They congratulate Rorty for a number of negative things that they all share: mostly a dislike of old distinctions, such as that between defining a vocabulary and using it, or between observation and theory, or between essence and accident, or thought and language, or fact and value. But then they draw back. Let us not go overboard, they say. There is still such a thing as getting it right and getting it wrong. You can say that Oswald acted alone when he did, or you can say it when he didn't. You may want to know whether genetically modified crops are dangerous, and it requires biology and laboratory trials and experimental protocols to discover the answer, not crystal balls or current linguistic usages. We are not merely trying to get a consensus when we are trying to find what is true. We are trying to arrive at the facts.

Rorty replies that we should not belittle efforts to establish consensus. So where the critic sees two possible goals (getting everyone to agree and getting at the facts), Rorty sees only one. There is no significant difference between convincing your peers and getting at the truth: "The guise of convincing your peers is the very face of truth itself." But then what is left of facing the facts? Well, facing the facts is literally nonsense: we can face the Eiffel Tower, but facts are not things with a place. (If they were, as Wittgenstein remarked, we could move them; but while you could move the Eiffel Tower to Berlin, you cannot move the fact that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris anywhere at all.) Facing the facts can mean only making judgments, and this is a social activity, enabled only by the rules that govern the language that you speak with your peers. By forgetting this, Rorty's critics forget the philosophical heritage that they believe themselves to share with him. They remain slaves to one version of what Sellars called the myth of the given, which is the idea of the transparent, incorrigible presence of individual fact in individual mind.

Rorty has made this counter many times, and he makes it again and again here. It is exactly parallel to the reply that Stanley Fish, a similar thinker, makes in his ongoing spats with Ronald Dworkin. Dworkin believes himself to be offering a specific conception of the right method for finding the legal truth, steering carefully between the arid desert of positivism (the myth of the given, in this instance the view that legal facts are transparently there in black-letter texts) and the licentious, anything-goes method of pragmatism or legal realism, which counsels judges to make law up according to the exigencies of the moment. Fish replies that each of these poles is a mirage, and therefore so is Dworkin's advice on how to steer between them. The first is a mirage because any text needs understanding, or taking up to apply to the problem in hand, and this understanding will be the work of the judge's mind, not of the text all by itself. The second is a mirage because any "judge" who pays no attention to statute or precedent has stopped judging, and has started to do something else, such as parodying the whole institution. So Dworkin's advice is about as valuable as the advice not to carry a baseball bat while playing tennis: law as integrity is no more a distinctive recipe for law than absence of baseball bats is a distinctive approach to tennis. Judges can only play according to the legal rules, which means attempting to gain the consensus of fellow members of the interpretive community by applying statute and precedent to the case at hand. Hence too there is no open space between "trying to find the right verdict" and "trying to convince fellow judges." There is no difference that makes a difference.

This is a nice reply. It is so nice, in fact, that it raises the suspicion that a rather important concession has been made. When Rorty first substitutes the goal of consensus for the goal of truth, we shudder at the outrageous image of someone valuing *après*-truth chit-chat in the coffeehouse above serious work in the library or the laboratory. It is this that is so shocking. But now it turns out that there is a qualification for membership in the coffeehouse. The talkers in the coffeehouse

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are to be masters of the library or the laboratory, just as the legal interpretive community includes only masters of the Constitution and of precedent.

It also turns out that we cannot achieve the consummation of consensus with them simply by mutual narcissism, each fixing his gaze on another and chiming in with his sayings. For in order to achieve consensus both our gaze and that of our peers must be fixed on the point at hand. If the issue is whether Oswald acted alone, the conversation must take place amid archives and news footage. If it is whether genetically modified foods are dangerous, it must take place in the biology lab. This is what is involved in being honest and curious—indeed, it is what is involved in understanding the issue in the first place. But, having gotten this far, why not also describe ourselves as people who want to know what happened—or as people who want to find the truth, and a good thing too? Why demolish the school gate?

IF RORTY FEELS entitled to say as much as he does, why can he not say more? Consider the virtues that he does regard as verifiable, such as curiosity and seriousness. We can imagine a community that can winnow out those who are not really curious about, say, whether Oswald acted alone, or not really serious in their inquiry into whether genetically modified crops are dangerous. Perhaps these dilettantes get their opinions from the newspapers, or reveal alarming tendencies toward emotionally distorted or wishful thinking. Rorty describes such people as being "unconversable"—but they are only unconversable, of course, if the conversation is of a particular type. Bullshitters are typically voluble, and to some audiences readable. The "theorists" whom Alan Sokal exhibited as having no understanding whatsoever of the science that they loved to invoke in their writings had big enough audiences. The failure that they supposedly illustrated is much better located by words such as "incompetent" or "incurious." But "incurious" just means not curious about the point at hand, that is, whether Oswald acted alone or whether GM food is dangerous.

Rorty sometimes tries to deflect this, suggesting that incuriosity denotes only a lack of receptivity to new vocabularies, as if, say, enjoying *Finnegans Wake* would be a recipe for a better history of the Kennedy assassination or a better understanding of GM food. But this is smoke, since it is a focused curiosity that matters. Similarly, "incompetent" means being unable to execute procedures for finding out whether Oswald acted alone or whether GM crops are dangerous. And if we can detect those people in this state, then the question stares us in the face: why can't we say more? Why can't we describe these people as having no concern, or an insufficient concern, for the truth, or an insufficient ability to find the truth? In other words, with proper attention to the notion of an inquiry, and to the notion of a community of inquirers, any remaining air escapes from the pragmatist balloon, and the circus leaves town.

This, indeed, is how Fish sees it: he believes that once we get this far, theory becomes irrelevant to practice, which goes on exactly as before. Rorty does not want to efface himself so quickly. He likes to imply that pragmatism really makes some practical difference, as we learn to oppose metaphysical prigs who suppose that reality has one true intrinsic nature, which only one final language, such as the language of theoretical physics, will represent. These prigs believe that there is a single Book of Nature, which true method will eventually read. When the philosophical going gets rough, Rorty frequently resorts to mocking this ideal.

But his mockery is only a way of making things easy for himself, because you do not need to subscribe to any such monolithic idea of truth in order to honor everyday truth and the love of particular truths. This is because there is every difference between the language that you choose to use and the truth or the falsity of what you say with it. Consider the enterprise of mapping a tract of land. A tract of land does not demand to be mapped in any way at all. There is no Book of the Landscape, for the landscape has no voice. It is utterly silent about whether your map should show contours or geology or houses or temperatures or anything else. What you choose to put on your map depends purely on the use to which you will put the map. Up to this point, pragmatism and Darwinism rule unchallenged. But this is only half the picture. For once you have made a choice, there are things to get right or wrong. Once you have chosen what to do, it is as if the landscape indeed acquires a voice, and it certainly has authority, since your map-making must attempt to make your map answer to it. If you purport to show cliffs but show none where there is one, then you have gotten the landscape wrong.

Rorty would prefer to say that the problem with your map is not one of how it represents the landscape or corresponds to the landscape, for those are metaphysically priggish terms. The problem, he wants to say, is just that users of your map are unlikely to cope very well. He fails to see that we do not have to choose between these things: we can have both. Users of the map without the cliff will not cope well when they come to the cliff, and we can explain why. It is because the map, with respect to the cliff, misrepresents the landscape.

Rorty is unlikely to accept the cartographic analogy. Perhaps we can compare maps with landscapes, but we cannot compare our own best theories with the truth, since we have no access to the truth except in the terms provided by our own best theories. We cannot "stand outside our own skins," as Berkeley saw in the seventeenth century when he said that an idea can resemble only another idea. Faced with this objection, it is natural to protest that sometimes we check our words not with more words, but with observation and prediction. But Rorty and his critics typically share a mistrust of those notions. They suppose that relying on them is too much like the positivist view of law, according to which black letters steer us independently of our own capacities to give them meanings.

This is the myth of the given, again. Rorty belongs to a generation of American philosophers who learned from Sellars that observation is itself a creature of language: your map determines how you see the landscape. So, they conclude, there is nothing but maps, maps all the way down, and there is no independent access to anything mapped. The philosophy in this book, and much of it is of a very high

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quality, testifies to the difficulty of remembering that sometimes it is not maps but cliffs. It is ironic, therefore, that one of Rorty's central pieces of iconoclasm is the death of epistemology, of the theory of knowledge, since it is precisely in that theory that these issues are fought. This is what epistemology is all about.

III.

JUSTIFYING SOMETHING TO your peers is not the same thing as getting it right. It is a political achievement to make sure that wherever it matters, in science, history, law, politics, or ethics, the people to whom you need to justify yourself have their gaze pointed in the right direction, and so will accept something only when it is likely to be true. Like any political achievement, it needs careful protection. This explains why the words went onto the school gate in the first place.

Sometimes Rorty seems to recognize this, though it seems to clash with his ambition to demolish. At any rate, he remains fond of saying that if we look after freedom, truth will look after itself. In a free world, he seems to think, only the people with the library tickets and the microscopes eventually get into the coffeehouse. This might sound like Mill's belief in the invincibility of truth—but Mill is much more the kind of stalwart who wrote the words on the school gate in the first place. Without those words, it seems romantically optimistic to expect the achievement to sustain itself. Rorty has this optimism. He has a soft spot for Deweyan visions of the psalm of the people, as muscular workers stride shoulder-to-shoulder down limitless vistas into ever more glorious sunrises, which they greet with ever more creative vocabularies.

Lost in this Whitmanesque glow, it is easy to forget that there is no reason whatever to believe that by itself freedom makes for truth, any more than there is to suppose that work makes one free. Freedom includes the freedom to blur history and fiction, or the freedom to spiral into a climate of myth, carelessness, incompetence, or active corruption. It includes the freedom to sentimentalize the past, or to demonize others, or to bury the bodies and manipulate the record. It is not only totalitarian societies that find truth slipping away from them: the emotionalists of contemporary populism, or the moguls of the media and the entertainment industries, can make it happen just as effectively. That is why Plato felt that he had to forge the vocabulary of reason and truth in opposition to democratic politics; and that is why it remains vandalism to rub the words off the school gates. Orwell thought this, and anybody worried about such things as the ideology of those who own the press, or the Disneyfication of history, should think it too.

RORTY DOES HOLD political views, and he holds that there is a definite if subtle relation between his pragmatism and his political views. He is celebrated for recommending "liberal irony" as the proper standpoint on life, the liberalism being the doctrine that "cruelty is the worst thing we do," and the irony arising from the knowledge that our vocabularies are transitory and contingent and always on the verge of obsolescence. Critics have been infuriated by the aestheticism or the weightlessness that Rortyan irony seems to suggest; but the more important point is that irony seems philosophically out of place in the philosophical situation that Rorty recommends.

Irony, in Rorty's teaching, is supposed to follow on the realization that your vocabulary is always provisional, that better ways of saying things might come along one day—but it is hard to see why this ought to beget irony. Unless you are the victim of an *après*-truth cartographer, you do very well to take the map seriously when it says there are cliffs, even if you foresee future maps that do not bother about them. The hill-walker who finds this thought destabilizing, and takes an ironic detachment toward his map, is likely to do worse. It is hard to imagine, of course, how any future maps that do not indicate cliffs could be useful to walkers, but then it is hard to see how a successor vocabulary—say, one that does not talk in terms of suffering, or equality, or freedom or power or justice—could be of much use in politics. So I think that we can safely set the irony aside.

And irony aside, it is a little difficult to know what to make of such liberalism. A political philosophy that simply reminds us that cruelty is the worst thing that we do has not really gotten very far; and there is nothing especially liberal about it (are conservatives for cruelty?). In fact, it is doubtful whether Rorty really believes it in any case. In this volume he enthusiastically endorses a very different view advocated by Robert Brandom. This holds that "mere mammalian pain"—a phrase, I should have thought, that trips off the tongues only of people largely unacquainted with what it describes—does not matter in itself. Brandom holds that "pain, and like it various sorts of social and economic deprivation," have only a "second-hand" moral and political significance. They are important only because they distract people from the activity that really matters: the pragmatist activity variously described as "vocabulary-mongering," or "contributing to the Conversation," or indulging in "sprightly repartee and the production of fruitful novel utterances." Pain matters because it incapacitates us for sprightly repartee! It turns out that cruelty is not the worst thing that we perpetrate. The worst thing is distraction.

THERE ARE VERY few really original ideas in moral philosophy, but this must surely be one of them. Its excuse, I suppose, is the fear of a Brave New World in which comfortable zombies live their satisfied porcine lives. And similar ideas do have a philosophical pedigree, right back to Plato and to the last book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which Aristotle extols the virtues of the life of intellectual contemplation, which to most contemporary philosophers simply means conversation with the cork in. But even in his paean to contemplation Aristotle does not hold that beautifully beguiling the leisure of the theory class is the only measure of value, and distracting us from it the only measure of evil.

To get the full measure of that doctrine, imagine on the one hand spending your time as a victim of pain: think of a "mere" mammalian pain, or if that is too hard to imagine from the comfort of the armchair, get up and put your hand on a hot stove. Imagine similarly a life of prolonged disease, starvation, humiliation, fear, and loss. And then imagine, for contrast, spending life doing quiet things that you might enjoy, such as gardening or golf. Now get yourself to believe that there is nothing to choose between them, since in each case there is the same distraction from vocabulary mongering and sprightly repartee. What a wonderful state of mind it must be—how stoic, how lofty, how intellectual—whereby a visit from the secret police, or a cancer, or the loss of a child, is on all fours with more time as a couch potato. This is a world in which a walk around the concentration camp is no more disturbing than a walk around the course at Augusta.

I do not suppose that Brandom and Rorty really believe this inhumane doctrine. It is just that the abstractions take over, so that at a particular point in the Conversation it sounds like a sprightly thing to say. One cannot help feeling that this is only because we are in a political coffeehouse with no very exacting standards of entry. It is not the sort of thing you could get away with in a well-ordered cartography school, or even a department of history, or politics, or literature, if literature includes Harriet Beecher Stowe and Dickens and Orwell and Primo Levi. It is not even something you should get away with in a philosophy department, provided that we can hold onto our gateposts. ■

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Decorum

By ADAM KIRSCH

The Darkness and the Light by Anthony Hecht

(Alfred A. Knopf, 68 pp., $23)

ONE OF ANTHONY HECHT'S best and most characteristic poems is "More Light! More Light!," which appeared in 1967, in his book *The Hard Hours*. It is an anecdote of the Holocaust:

> We move now to outside a German wood.
> Three men are there commanded to dig
> a hole
> In which the two Jews are ordered to lie
> down
> And be buried alive by the third, who is
> a Pole.
>
> Not light from the shrine at Weimar
> beyond the hill
> Nor light from heaven appeared. But he
> did refuse.
> A Lüger settled back deeply in its glove.
> He was ordered to change places with
> the Jews.
>
> Much casual death had drained away
> their souls.
> The thick dirt mounted toward the
> quivering chin.
> When only the head was exposed the
> order came
> To dig him out again and to get back in.
>
> No light, no light in the blue Polish eye.
> When he finished a riding boot packed
> down the earth.
> The Lüger hovered lightly in its glove.
> He was shot in the belly and in three
> hours bled to death.

When the Pole offers a glimmer of resistance, the Jews willingly become his executioners; his momentary bravery saves nobody, and it results in his own murder. The exclusion of moral light from this episode is insistent: versions of the phrase "no light" are repeated four times. But what makes the atrocity especially dark to Hecht is that it occurs just outside Weimar, the "shrine" of Goethean humanism, and represents the denial of Goethe's dying plea.

The same irony is employed in another of Hecht's poems about the Holocaust, "Rites and Ceremonies":

> *Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde,*
> But for years the screaming continued,
> night and day....

The line from Goethe's tranquil poem "*Wandrers Nachtlied II*" means simply "The little birds are hushed in the wood," but to Hecht the poem and the literature it represents are cancelled by the "screaming" of suffering Jews.

This is the familiar dramaturgy of culture versus barbarism, which can lead to the error of believing that German culture was the most significant of Germany's victims. The fact that the massacre takes place near Weimar is certainly ironic; but it is not what makes the massacre tragic. Yet this theme has a double irony in Hecht's poetry, for at the same time as he reflects on the shattering of humanism, his own language continues to pay homage to it. Hecht's regular meter and rhyme, his formal diction ("Much casual death"), and his clear expository sentences betray none of the hesitation that his subject seems to demand. The means of expression are not called into doubt by the horror of what must be expressed. Quite the contrary. Hecht insists on still greater decorum and rigor when his theme is darkness and chaos. He is like the courtier of a deposed monarch, punctually attending the shrunken levees of reason.

Through seven books and nearly five decades, Hecht's poetry has maintained this disciplined disjunction between form and subject. He writes very often of the forces of dissolution—evil, chaos, lust, slovenliness—but always in a decorous style, as though these subjects were explosive chemicals that can only be handled with tongs. "Goliardic Song," a small poem about sexual desire (in the form of "Venus Pandemos"), deliberately exaggerates this decorum to the point of archness:

> We, who have been her students,
> Matriculated clerks
> In scholia of imprudence
> And vast, veneral Works,
> Taken and passed our orals,
> Salute her classic poise:
> Ur-Satirist of Morals
> And Mother of our Joys.

This is donnish and comic. In Hecht's new book, however, the poem "Elders" is an earnest portrait of the sources and consequences of lust:

> As a boy he was awkward, pimpled,
> unpopular,
> Disdained by girls, avoided by other boys,
> An acned solitary. But bold and
> spectacular
> The lubricious dreams that such a one
> enjoys....
>
> And so it went year by tormented year,
> His yearnings snarled in some tight,
> muddled sensation
> Of violence, a gout of imperiousness, fear
> And resentment yeasting in ulcered
> incubation.

It is characteristic of Hecht that this description, however personal its source, is meant to apply to one of the "elders" in the biblical story who watched Susanna bathe. The self-disgust of the poem is tamed by giving it a respectable frame, by turning it into an allusion. And the language itself conspires in this taming: the rhyme scheme, the rhythm, the Latinate diction all ward off any real violence of feeling.

Nor is such violence attained even when Hecht's language is deliberately coarse:

> I have been in this bar
> For close to seven days.
> The dark girl over there,
> For a modest dollar, lays.
>
> And you can get a blow-job
> Where other men have pissed
> In the little room that's sacred
> To the Evangelist.

This might be a monologue by any pimp or drunk, but in fact it is spoken by "The Man Who Married Magdalene," from *The Hard Hours*. To most of Hecht's readers, the Magdalene is not a vital religious symbol, but merely an allusion. One does not feel that the poet himself is really trying to imagine her or her husband. Her presence serves instead to make a low scene more palatable. And while there is a moment of genuine scabrousness in these lines—the suggestion that the prostitute's mouth is "where other men have pissed"—other elements work against such a shock. There is the odd use of the word "lays," which is usually not transitive; there is the

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far-fetched joke about the Evangelist (the "John"). These things work to separate the cultivated author of the poem from its degraded speaker.

The only purpose of creating such a speaker, of course, is to allow the poet to express a similar part of his own nature. Hecht is never prudish or self-regarding when dealing with vices; the man we come to know in his work is highly prone to lust and anger. "Poppy," in his new book, identifies anger as another powerful foe of the light:

> It builds like unseen fire deep in a mine,
> This igneous, molten wrath,
> This smelting torture that rises with the decline
> Of reason, signifying death.

But at the same time the man who suffers these vices is usually divorced from the poet who writes about them. This is the cost of Hecht's defensive posture with regard to the values of civilization. He has identified form with reason and reason with goodness, so that his poems, even when they are about evil and degrading things, are always formal, reasonable, and good. But this means that they cannot really express evil and degrading things. They do not allow such things to rise to speech, only to be spoken about.

The allure of such strictness is easy to understand. Hecht's writing life—his first book was published in 1954—has coincided with a universal abandonment of formal strictness, not least in the poetic sphere. In an essay on Richard Wilbur, Hecht writes of "this poetic era of arrogant solipsism and limp narcissism—when great, shaggy herds of poets write only about themselves, or about the casual workings of their rather tedious minds." In such times, an erudite, sensitive, and earnest poet such as Hecht might well feel that Apollo demands much, too much, of his powers, since the rest of the world has gone over heedlessly to Dionysus.

In the new book, "An Orphic Calling" finds a symbol of Apollonian clarity in the music of Bach, which is compared to the currents of a stream:

> And from deep turbulent rapids, roiled and spun,
> They rise in watery cycles to those proud
> And purifying heights where they'd begun
> On Jungfrau cliffs of edelweiss and cloud,
>
> Piled cumuli, that *fons et origo*
> ("Too lofty and original to rage")
> Of the mind's limpid unimpeded flow
> Where freedom and necessity converge....
>
> An Orphic calling it is, one that invites
> Responsories, a summons to lute-led
> Nature, as morning's cinnabar east ignites
> And the instinctive sunflower turns its head.

The metaphor of the stream rising from turbulent depths to purifying heights might seem like an orthodox account of sublimation. Yet Hecht extends the logic further, and so reverses it: the stream itself began as rain from the "piled cumuli" of heaven, the depths began in the heights. "The mind's limpid unimpeded flow" is the beginning and the end of art; but this means that the terrestrial world is only a way station.

The myth of Orpheus is treated in a similarly one-sided fashion. Hecht has in mind the Orpheus who awakened Nature with his song, not the Orpheus who descended into Hell. The "Orphic calling" is that of Orpheus to the plants, not that of Eurydice to Orpheus himself. And the poem's refusal to acknowledge this second, more famous Orphic myth is so complete that it returns with all the force of the repressed, reminding us of what is missing from such a conception of art.

As "An Orphic Calling" suggests, Hecht's idea of the beautiful is of something brachiated, gemmed, baroque. His poems abound in such golden descriptions, as in "Somebody's Life":

> He gazed down at the breakneck rocks below,
> Entranced by the water's loose attacks of jade,
> The sousing waves, the interminable, blind
> Fury of scattered opals, flung tiaras,
> Full, hoisted, momentary chandeliers.

Or again, in the new book, "A Certain Slant":

> Etched on the window were barbarous thistles of frost,
> Edged everywhere in that tame winter sunlight
> With pavé diamonds and fine prickles of ice....

Perhaps because the human world is corrupt, Hecht turns to this sort of inanimate splendor with a religious attentiveness, as he explains in "Devotions of a Painter," from *The Transparent Man*:

> Cool sinuosities, waved banners of light,
> Unfurl, remesh, and round upon themselves
> In a continual turmoil of benign
> Cross-purposes, effortlessly as fish....
> I am an elderly man in a straw hat
> Who has set himself the task of praising God
> For all this welter by setting out my paints
> And getting as much truth as can be managed
> Onto a small flat canvas.

As the lines themselves acknowledge, there is a limit to the truth that can be captured in this way. Poetry is a poor tool for accurate observation; language drives toward abstraction, and in spite of itself makes what is seen into a symbol. It is hard to distinguish one description of light from another. This fact presents less of a problem to a poet, such as Dante, for whom light is explicitly symbolic of the Divine. For such a writer, it is less necessary that we see the light than that we understand it. But Hecht, like many contemporary poets, professes a Flemish-painting spirituality, in which the detailed observation of nature is itself a kind of prayer, a way of "praising God" for the sheer fact of existence. And in this form of attention, whose whole reason for being is detail, the inability of poetry to capture visual detail is a more serious problem.

Hecht's best and most exciting work has not been his still lifes, but his long dramatic monologues, especially those in *The Venetian Vespers* (1980). The title poem of that book, spoken by a dying man in Venice, is the height of Hecht's art, and it is surely one of the best poems written in the last thirty years. Here his elevated language, slowly unrolling in blank verse, is entirely appropriate to the atmosphere of elegance run to seed. Hecht's Venice, which is the sordid city of Mann's Aschenbach, provides adequate symbols for the moral darkness that the poet usually has difficulty in evoking:

> Returning suddenly to the chalk-white sunlight
> Of out-of-doors, one spots among the tourists
> Those dissolute young with heavy-lidded gazes
> Of cool, clear-eyed, stony depravity
> That in the course of only a few years
> Will fade into the terrifying boredom
> In the faces of Carpaccio's prostitutes.

Playing the role of narrator in "The Venetian Vespers" allows Hecht to observe and to communicate the evils he often feels compelled to isolate and oppose. One can see the difference by comparing this convincing description of the "dissolute young" with the lampoon of them in his poem "To L. E. Sissman, 1928–1976," from *The Transparent Man*:

> Dear friend, whose poetry of Brooklyn flats

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And poker sharps broadcasts the tin pan
truths
Of all our yesterdays, speaks to our
youths
In praise of both Wallers, Edmund and
Fats,

And will be ringing in some distant ear
When the Mod-est, last immodesty
fatigues,
All Happenings have happened, the
Little Leagues
Of Pop and pop-fly poets disappear...

Here, the younger generation, its fashions and behavior, are irritably dismissed in a way that sounds close to old-fogeyism. Of course, this is a smaller, more jocular poem. But there is generally a distinct souring of Hecht's tone when he is defending, in his own voice, the old against the new. In the new book, the poem "Rara Avis in Terris" is similarly marred by its unbecoming attacks on English-department feminists:

The ladies' auxiliary of the raptor clan
With their bright cutlery,
sororal to a man.
And feeling peckish, they foresee
An avian banquet in the sky,
Feasting off dead white European males,
Or local living ones, if all else fails.

Generally, the further Hecht moves from the *propria persona*, the better his poetry. This makes him exceptional among contemporary poets, whose excursions into narrative are usually failed experiments. In *The Darkness and the Light*, there are no poems on the scale of "The Venetian Vespers," but "A Fall," "A Brief Account of Our City," and "1945" are in the same category. "1945" tells of another incident from World War II, in which a French family seems willing to sacrifice their son's life to keep their bicycle hidden from a German officer. As in "More Light! More Light!," Hecht is calling our attention to human evil, and his remote, objective tone is that of a judge admitting an exhibit into evidence:

It wasn't charity. Perhaps mere prudence,
Saving a valuable round of ammunition
For some more urgent crisis. Whatever
it was,
The soldier reslung his rifle on his
shoulder,
Turned wordlessly and walked on down
the road
The departed German vehicles had
taken.

This narrative is especially strong in contrast to the other two parts of the sequence, "Sacrifice," to which it belongs. These are monologues by Abraham and Isaac about the sacrifice of Isaac, averted by God at the last minute. The story is so well known that it demands some original interpretation or striking new idiom to make it live again. But Hecht's language here is sedate and literary:

Youthful I was and trusting and strong
of limb,
The fresh-split firewood roped tight to
my back,
And I bore unknowing that morning
my funeral pyre.

The diction ("bore," "pyre") and the inversions make this sound unlike the speech of any actual person or period. It is a middle register of refined poetic diction, pleasing in its way, but not a sensitive medium for recording experience. Similarly, "Haman," another short biblical monologue, makes the obvious comparison between that Persian enemy of the Jews and their modern German enemy. But the malice of "Haman the Hangman" is swaddled in an idiom remote from contemporary speech: "Let the Jews tremble," "ridding the world," "chastening penalty," "hanker after."

This sort of refinement is a persistent temptation in Hecht's verse, the hazard of his desire to defend and to continue a tradition, for it is always difficult for a poet to be sure when he is renewing a tradition and when he is only echoing it. For similar reasons, allusion is problematic in Hecht's poetry. His work is saturated with reference, especially to Shakespeare, but the effect is often to make it seem as though texts have replaced things as the objects of thought. In "The Witch of Endor," another biblical monologue, he writes:

I had the gift, and arrived at the
technique
That called up spirits from the vasty
deep....

The second (and rather famous) line is a version of Glendower's in *Henry IV*—"I can call spirits from the vasty deep"—but this association works against the present context. Glendower's claim is meant to be vain and boastful, quickly parried by Hotspur: "But will they come when you do call for them?" Yet Hecht does not seem to wish to undermine the Witch's powers. It is rather that his mind moves so much in the Shakespearean realm that the idea of conjuring immediately calls forth this quotation. And this marks a separation between the poet's mind and that of the Witch whose voice he is attempting to assume. Allusion becomes another way in which the poet keeps his subject under quarantine.

The Darkness and the Light confirms rather than extends the domain of Hecht's art. His gifts are of a kind rare today—seriousness, intelligence, formal discipline—and he has expressed as skillfully as any writer of the last fifty years the anxiety of the civilized mind facing the large and small barbarisms of the age. But that very stance is also what sets a severe limitation to his poetry. It is not necessary for a modern poet to take chaos as his theme; but if he does, it may be necessary for him to accede to that chaos, to allow it into his very speech, as Lowell and Berryman and Plath did in their various ways. It is to them, rather than to Hecht, that future readers will turn for a sense of what it was like to live, and suffer, in our time. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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1990s, have declined in socioeconomic status and reassumed their subordinate position. The Russian immigration, a boost to the state's Jewish demography, was allocated substantial funds at the national level in order to convince these newcomers to stay. "Aliya baskets"—financial, residential, and work benefits—eased their landing in Israel's harsh environment. These "resource reservoirs" were drawn, among others, from funds that could have served underprivileged social groups such as Israel's Arab population. Housing projects earmarked solely for Jews were built using public resources, and public-sector job vacancies were filled by immigrant employees who replaced Arab workers. Furthermore, a variety of incentives were offered to private-sector employers hiring immigrants.

The fragile normality of Israel's heterogeneous social fabric is beginning to reveal serious tears at the seams, proving once more that in the Middle East there is no stable status quo—and that no condition can be expected to remain on hold when it is temporarily disregarded. The current atmosphere in the Jewish state has deteriorated to the point where Arabs are uncertain of their desire or ability to take part in the state's pluralistic vision. And thus a looming, undesired climax is waiting in the blurry future; Israeli democracy will be the first and worst casualty.

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CHICAGO DIARIST

The Juror

MOST PEOPLE HATE RECEIVING a jury summons. I certainly do. But I have one consolation: I'll never be a juror. I teach law at the University of Chicago, and lawyers never choose law professors to sit on juries. Especially not law professors who have written about jury behavior (in my case, arguing that jurors tend to swing rapidly toward the already dominant opinion).

THAT, AT LEAST, IS WHAT I THOUGHT before I reported to a Cook County judge on June 14. The judge asked the prospective jurors about their backgrounds, and when he reached me, I detected gleams in the lawyers' eyes (the prosecutor, I later learned, had used my constitutional law casebook in law school). To my dismay, I was chosen to serve as a juror in an upcoming case. And not just any case but a racially charged criminal prosecution—the stuff of TV dramas and newspaper headlines.

THE DEFENDANT, RYAN WILLIAMS (all names have been changed), was 25 years old and African American. He stood well over six feet tall and weighed over 200 pounds. Williams was accused of battering Tom Stennis, a white police officer. According to the prosecution, Stennis and his partner noticed a parked car facing the wrong way on the street, with the rear vent window knocked out and replaced by cardboard. Suspecting the car was stolen, the officers went to investigate, and, as they approached, they asked the four occupants to put their hands up. The occupants refused. Three of the four hurled obscenities at the officers. Stennis's partner, Michael Raiter, noticed a marijuana cigarette in Williams's hand and asked him to get out of the car (which Williams did) and to allow himself to be arrested and handcuffed (which Williams refused to do). The people in the car continued screaming. Williams said, "This is bullshit" and "You aren't arresting me, motherfuckers; I ain't going to no jail." Stennis called for backup, and between ten and 15 officers arrived. They removed the occupants from the car and separated them into different police cruisers. Williams kicked and screamed; ultimately, he lunged out the rear door and slugged Stennis in the face. The police maced Williams twice before he was subdued. At the station, he said, "When I get out I'm going to kill you all."

THE DEFENSE HAD AN ENTIRELY DIFferent account. Williams's lawyers said that the four people in the car were waiting for Williams's niece, who was in a store. For no apparent reason, two officers came over to their car and asked them to put their hands up. Williams asked, "What's the problem?" to which the officers responded, "Shut up." One of the officers planted marijuana on the scene and tried to arrest Williams, who resisted arrest. At that point, at least three officers started to beat up Williams; then they maced him. Williams never threw a punch.

WE, THE JURY, WERE A DIVERSE LOT. There were seven women and five men; five whites, six African Americans, and Edward Gonzales, a Mexican-American. I expected big racial divisions within the jury. After all, a young black man was accused of battering a white police officer. All the witnesses seemed reasonably credible, and each side testified that the other side was lying through its teeth. I have studied some social science on such cases, and I knew what might well happen: The jury would divide along racial lines, and the division would harden as we talked.

I WAS WRONG. THE MOMENT WE ENtered the jury room, everyone started talking at once, not declaring guilt or innocence but discussing pieces of the testimony. Mrs. Porter, a white woman originally from Portugal, insisted that "[a]ll of them were lying." David Broome, a young African American, said, "This is hard; there are too many loopholes," meaning that, on both sides, there were too many pieces that didn't fit. Porter emphasized that there was no medical evidence of injury to either Stennis or Williams. Estelle Winston, a 61-year-old African American woman with an air of authority, pointed out that the officers' initial reports did not mention a punch to Stennis. We all examined a photograph that the prosecution claimed showed Stennis's injury. If you looked hard, you could see redness around his right eye. But this was not the face of someone who'd been hit hard.

WE TOOK AN INITIAL VOTE. GONZALES and one other person wanted to convict; five wanted to acquit (including me, tentatively); five were undecided. No one believed the police planted the marijuana, and some of us emphasized that Williams and his witnesses, unlike the police, had an obvious motive for lying. Those leaning toward acquittal wondered about the photograph. And why Stennis didn't get some sort of medical report. And why the officers didn't write up the punch at the time. No one mentioned race. Most of the jurors, black and white, simply didn't think it had much to do with the central question—did Williams really punch Stennis? But social science held up better on another point: The more we talked, the more the group did indeed move toward the view with the most initial proponents in the room: acquittal.

BUT THERE WAS A GLITCH: GONZALES insisted on conviction. Porter pressed him about the lack of evidence. Winston got mad, and others started to yell at him. Gonzales wouldn't budge. From my research, I had an idea: Gonzales might be swayed if we showed him that a vote to acquit would fit with his own self-conception and his highest ideals. So I asked him, "Do you love this country?" and he responded, "Yes, I fought for this country." I said that, in America, you don't go to jail unless twelve people think, beyond a reasonable doubt, that you've committed a crime. He stared at me and said, "There are only two things I have to do. Pay taxes and die. I'm not going to change my mind."

AFTER NEARLY FOUR HOURS, OUR EXhausted group started to panic. We sent a short note to the judge explaining the situation. After an hour, the judge called us into court, where we were promptly dismissed. In an informal discussion afterward, the judge explained that, with the jury likely to hang, Williams had accepted a misdemeanor conviction for resisting arrest. The prosecutors agreed, and Williams, who had apparently been in jail for many months awaiting trial, went home. At that point, the judge authorized us to discuss the case.

DID THE SYSTEM WORK? YES AND NO. Williams shouldn't have had to spend months in jail, but there was no question that he resisted arrest. On the battery charge, since there wasn't enough evidence, we were right not to find him guilty. One theory held true: With the exception of the implacable Gonzales, the group really did coalesce around the initial disposition of its members. More importantly, another theory did not hold true: In this racially charged case, at least, a diverse jury assessed the evidence without the slightest reference to skin color. Which left me proud to have served.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN

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